



# Horticulture *Action Plan*



2014-2019



HEALTHY GARDEN  
Photo: J. Leekie



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## A. INTRODUCTION

The **Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS)** works collaboratively across jurisdictional boundaries to support actions and information that can help reduce the threat and impacts of invasive species. The Horticulture Sub-Committee was designed to educate gardeners, garden retailers, nurseries, growers and the landscape industry to better understand the problem with garden invasives and encourage the use of alternative non-invasive plants. This sub-committee was also created to promote information sharing and standard messaging amongst the provincial horticulture outreach groups.



This **Horticulture Action Plan** for the CCIS recommends priorities based on each Provincial Council's current horticulture programs whilst encouraging new national actions. The level of excellence in communication will directly affect the success of the CCIS Horticulture program and the level of participation by nurseries across Canada. This Horticulture Action Plan will be used to build on the successes of other horticulture programs in order to create an all-inclusive plan for the entire country.

The goal of the CCIS is to:

- Promote the objectives of the *Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Canada*, including prevention, early detection, rapid response and management –containment, control and eradication.

The recommendations in this document include both provincial and national actions. It is anticipated that the CCIS will act as the lead for project delivery, as prioritized, with financial and in-kind assistance from a network of collaborators through the provincial councils as required.

## B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR A NATIONAL NETWORK/APPROACH

Under the guidance of the Horticulture Sub-Committee – the goals of the National Horticulture Network are to encourage the Provincial Councils to:

- Develop and promote partnerships between national and provincial horticulture/nursery associations, the CCIS and its provincial members
- Promote branding, information sharing, resource consistency, and standard messaging amongst the provincial horticulture outreach groups.
- Educate gardeners, garden retailers, nurseries, growers, and the landscape industry to:
  - Understand what invasive plants are, why they're a problem, and what they can do to prevent their spread;
  - Stop buying and selling invasive plants;
  - Promote the sale and purchase of non-invasive alternative plants;
  - Control or replace invasive plant species; and
  - Dispose of unwanted plants/plant material properly.
- Develop a national voluntary code of conduct for nurseries and retailers.
- Recognize the larger national groups participating in the program.

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## C. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Currently the Horticulture Sub-Committee has held informal meetings to compile information on the status and need of horticultural programs across Canada.

The following were our objectives for the 2013/2014 Fiscal Year.

- Begin to establish a relationship with national groups such as the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association; Canadian Ornamental Plant Foundation; International Plant Propagators Society; Canadian Society of Landscape Architects; Growers Canada; and Garden Centres Canada.
- Share resources and information.

### Status of horticultural invasive plant/species programs across Canada

#### British Columbia

The BC PlantWise program is designed to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plants through horticulture pathways, specifically through the buying, selling, trading, gifting and moving of invasive plants. The program encourages responsible horticulture industry and consumer behaviours, namely choosing to utilize safe, non-invasive plant alternatives in place of invasive plants. The program is based on the Grow Me Instead (GMI) resource and includes targeted tools for industry and consumers. Industry tools include a Voluntary Code of Conduct, Certification Manual, on site PlantWise orientation, and in store resources such as shelf talkers and signs which identify non-invasive alternative species. The consumer program includes a selection of resources modeled after the Grow Me Instead (GMI) booklet, namely a GMI Snapshot pamphlet, GMI folding wallet card, and various best management practice documents for specific species of horticultural concern.



The ISCBC PlantWise program is creating provincial partnerships, educating stewardship and community groups, and establish a network of PlantWise Ambassadors across the province that are informed and active in conveying the PlantWise message to the public and in distributing associated resources at gardening and stewardship related events and meetings throughout BC. Key elements of the program include PlantWise and Grow Me Instead (GMI) initiatives related to the horticulture industry and plant trade as part of the overall changing behaviour program. PlantWise Program outcomes will include: an established network of PlantWise Ambassadors; training modules prepared and ready for in person and online delivery; development of a regular webinar series; and commitments by individuals and organizations to purchase only non-invasive plant alternatives at garden centers and related outlets.



ISCBC will provide provincial programming through: direct contact with interested groups; open webinars, training modules, and curriculum; and online resources. ISCBC is partnering with the Master Gardeners of BC and its six constituent Chapters to include PlantWise in its Master Gardener Basic Training Program curriculum and to distribute PlantWise resources at relevant events, meetings and presentations.

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## Alberta

Currently there is no formal program in place but the AISC does have a brochure called weed wise, which has been distributed by Landscape Alberta.

## Saskatchewan

Five years ago Saskatchewan held a workshop in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, and from there they developed a Voluntary code of conduct program for nurseries.

## Manitoba

Has begun working with the Horticultural industry, but still has no formal program.

## Ontario

The Ontario Grow Me Instead Program was created to inform the public and garden retailers of the problem with invasive horticultural plants, and provide them with the information they need to confidently choose non-invasive alternative plants. The program consists of two guidebooks (one for northern Ontario and one for southern Ontario), a canned presentation, and a nursery recognition program. The Nursery Recognition Program (NRP) The NRP recognizes nurseries that carry and promote the sale of the non-invasive and native garden plants featured in the Grow Me Instead guide. These nurseries are provided with posters, guides and cards to help educate their clients of the alternatives in their garden centre. Since it began the NRP has been expanded in stages across Ontario and was expanded again this summer through our local coordinator partners. There are now 33 Nurseries signed on to the program throughout Southern Ontario. A full list of participating nurseries can be found on the OIPC website on the Gardeners and Horticulturalist page. [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca)

## Quebec

No formal program at this time

## Newfoundland and Labrador

No formal program at this time

## New Brunswick

No formal program at this time

## Nova Scotia

No formal program at this time

## PEI

No formal program at this time

## Yukon

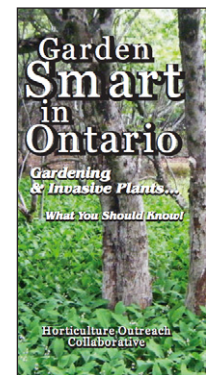
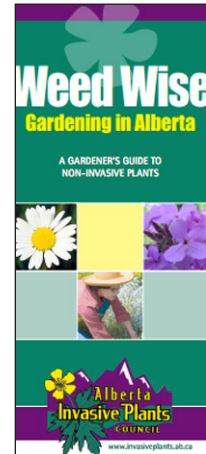
No formal program at this time

## Northwest Territories

No formal program at this time

## Nunavut

No formal program at this time.



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## D. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Compile and compare baseline information

In order to assess the effectiveness of actions, projects and campaigns undertaken by CCIS, baseline information is needed through a summary of information on existing outreach activities related to nursery programs across Canada. Currently the state of each provincial campaign is known and this will help to guide what is needed to implement a strong national campaign. Ideally baseline information should be collected for future comparison in the following areas:

- Identify and promote existing provincial and national initiatives for engaging our target audiences, and their effectiveness.
- Identify willingness for nurseries to adopt the “Grow Me Instead” or other consistent horticultural messaging.

### 2. Identify Gaps and Opportunities

By compiling and comparing baseline information the CCIS can summarize the information collected in order to better understand where the gaps and opportunities lie.

### 3. Identify Key national Partners and actions

By identifying the key national partners and actions for this campaign the CCIS will be able to prioritize messaging and target audiences.

### 4. Identify recommended national approaches

National Branding: Consistent branding will help show that the Provinces are united against invasive horticultural plants and help customers relate the different messaging. (create templates)

Change industry behavior:

- Develop a National Code of Conduct:** intended for industry members to their commitment to becoming invasive free.
- Develop a National certification:** Voluntary program for industry to become invasive free
- Provide National Recognition:** certified industry will be recognized by their provincial council and the CCIS

### 5. Campaigns

- Develop a national campaign aimed at gardeners and nurseries emphasizing alternatives to invasive horticultural species through the provincial “Grow Me Instead” campaigns, in collaboration with the other provincial invasive plant councils. Messaging and information should be posted online on the CCIS website, our provincial websites and our partners i.e. CNLA
- Use Community Based Social Marketing to encourage behavioural change.

### 6. Outreach and Actions for Key Target Audiences

- Seek commitments from the target audiences to encourage the change of behavior through the Voluntary Code of Conduct.
- Production of materials to spread the word about garden invasive plants, their impacts and suggested alternatives is an important aspect of a successful horticulture action plan, but distributing those materials to the correct target audience and seeking a resulting change in

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behavior is just as important. Some venues offer an opportunity to interact with key target audiences. Projects that could be delivered to our key target audiences can be disseminated nationally or provincially:

#### NATIONAL

- Create a tool kit which would include templates of the voluntary code of conduct and certification manual that can be adapted by the provincial councils to suit their needs.
- Focus on national branding campaign.
  - develop a common logo
  - develop a common branding campaign for attracting industry
  - Compose articles for gardening magazines and newsletters include reference to our website.
- Website links: seek opportunities to place key introductory information on the website with national links (CNLA) have these sites link to the CCIS site.

#### PROVINCIAL

- With the help of the national toolkit customize the Code of Conduct and certification manual and provide to interested industry partners in conjunction with industry training tools.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### Desired Features of the Website

- Develop web pages that support current campaigns, and retain information that remains valuable after a campaign is finished.
- Link to provincial Councils and their Grow Me Instead or Horticulture Programs
- Link to CNLA and other partners

### Access to Documents

- Post documents throughout the website, linked to other council sites.

### Facilitate Communication with Key Audiences

- Encourage the placement of links to our website (or pages within it) from the websites that are frequented by members of our target audiences (i.e. Garden Plant Nurseries; Landscape industry)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Identify relevant partners using social media to distribute messages & materials
- Use social media channels to engage in conversation with key partners and share their messages (create reciprocal relationship).
- Use keywords and phrases (& include “hashtags” #) to help reach targeted audiences