Canadian Council on Invasive Species
Conseil Canadien des Espèces Envahissantes

CANADA'S UNWANTED INVASIVE PLANTS

Invasive species are a growing threat to Canada's ecosystems and are capable of overtaking and displacing native species. Although most introduced plants do not disrupt ecosystems, there are a very limited number of 'alien, non-native' plants that are identified as 'high risk' and a direct threat to human health and safety, the environment, and the economy. These plants are known as invasive due to their ability to aggressively take over the landscape.

This list outlines some of Canada's unwanted invasive species from coast to coast to coast. The goal of the list is to raise awareness of invasive plant species across Canada. It was developed by cross-referencing Invasive plant lists from Invasive species councils across Canada as well as regulated species lists. Not all of the species are currently widespread in the gardening, horticulture or landscaping trade, but are still of high concern across Canada and could be traded among gardeners or the horticulture community. As Canadians, it is our responsibility to not grow, plant, trade or buy these high risk, invasive plants in order to protect the natural diversity of Canada's landscapes.

**All of the species referred to on this list are species-specific and do not refer to other species in that plant family.*

**Cultivars of these species are not listed here and since not listed, may be safe to plant and use. It is important to note that all cultivars or 'sterile' plants could still have the ability to reproduce and or spread, although hopefully less aggressive.*

**Some of these species are federally, provincially or territorially regulated, therefore, comply with all laws that regulate invasive plants for specific regions.*

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Canada's Unwanted Invasive Plant Species

This list refers to species that cause a significant amount of damage to our ecosystems and economy if left unchecked and are extremely difficult to manage. Learn how to identify these species so you can prevent their spread.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAMES (ENGLISH)	IMPACTS
Acer platanoides	Norway Maple	Grows rapidly and once established they create a thick canopy which block sunlight from the forest floor restricting growth of native shrubs and ground cover.
Ailanthus altissima	Tree-of-heaven	Forms dense, clonal thickets which displace native species and can rapidly invade fields, meadows, and harvested forests.
Berberis vulgaris	Common Barberry	Can impact agriculture, barberry species are the alternate hosts of black stem rust, a disease capable of causing major damage/loss to grain crops.
Butomus umbellatus	Flowering Rush; Grassy Rush; Water Gladiolus	Resembles a large sedge, and flourishes along shorelines and as a submersed plant in lakes and rivers. Dense stands interfere with recreation, crowd out native plants, and can be harmful to fish and wildlife.
Centaurea stoebe	Spotted Knapweed	Can easily overpower native plants, altering the native biodiversity a particular area has. Once Spotted Knapweed has fully taken over an area, it releases a chemical toxin into the ground which affects and restricts the growth and germination of native plants, making them weak and easy to take over.
Cynanchum rossicum	Dog-Strangling Vine; pale swallow-wort; European swallow-wort	vine threatens the monarch butterfly, a species at risk in Ontario. The butterflies lay their eggs on the plant, but the larvae are unable to complete their life cycle and do not survive.
Cytisus scoparius	Scotch Broom	Scotch broom invades rangelands, replacing forage plants, and is a serious competitor to conifer seedlings
Daphne laureola	Spurge Laurel	A serious public health risk due to toxicity of all plant parts. Spreads rapidly and grows densely in undisturbed as well as disturbed areas, shades native plants, thus displacing them and reducing biodiversity.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAMES (ENGLISH)	IMPACTS
Eichhornia crassipes	Common Water Hyacinth	Slows down water flow, blocks irrigation canals, delays hydroelectric and water treatment plants.
Euphorbia cyparissias	Cypress Spurge	Can invade open disturbed areas such as fields, pastures, agricultural land, roadsides, and yards. It is toxic to livestock so infestations reduce the forage value of pastures and contaminates hayfields.
Euphorbia esula	Leafy Spurge	The entire plant contains white, milky latex that can irritate skin of livestock and humans, resulting in blisters and swelling. Leafy spurge invades rangeland, reducing its productivity for livestock and wildlife.
Euphorbia myrsinites	Myrtle Spurge	Spruges are uniquely competitive invasive plants as they produce a compound that actively inhibits the growth of other plants nearby. The entire plant contains white, milky latex that can irritate skin of livestock and humans, resulting in blisters and swelling. Leafy spurge invades rangeland, reducing its productivity for livestock and wildlife.
Fallopia japonica	Japanese Knotweed	Aggressive plant with a strong root system that has been known to break through asphalt and concrete.
Fallopia sachalinensis	Giant Knotweed	Aggressive plant with a strong root system that has been known to break through asphalt and concrete.
Gypsophila paniculata	Tall/Common Baby's-breath	Baby's breath that mixes with hay reduces the protein value of the crop, making it less valuable for livestock and wildlife forage.
Heracleum mantegazzianum	Giant Hogweed, Giant Cow Parsnip	The clear watery sap of giant hogweed contains toxins that can cause severe dermatitis (inflammation of the skin). You can get severe burns if you get the sap on your skin and the skin is then exposed to sunlight.
Hieracium aurantiacum	Orange Hawkweed	Hawkweeds' main impact is on the forest industry, with the risk of establishment and spread along roads or areas that are not reforested.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAMES (ENGLISH)	IMPACTS
Hydrilla verticillata	Waterweed, Waterthyme	It can hinder the flow of water, as well as recreational activities such as swimming, fishing and boating. By causing stagnant water, hydrilla may provide habitat that allows mosquitoes to breed.
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag Iris, Pale Yellow Iris	The plant reduces habitat available for wildlife, including native fish habitat and bird nesting and rearing sites.
Leucanthemum vulgare	Oxeye Daisy	A single plant produces 26,000 seeds and dispersal from parent plants lead to nearby infestations. Due to its unpleasant taste, most grazers avoid this plant, leaving it to spread easily within grazed grasslands, pastures, and rangelands.
Linaria dalmatica	Dalmatian Toadflax	Dalmatian toadlfax infestations reduce available forage for cattle and wildlife, and is found along roadsides, in gardens, cultivated fields, and other open, disturbed areas
Linaria vulgaris	Butter-and-eggs; Yellow Toadflax	Has the ability to adapt to various site conditions; it grows on gravelly to sandy soil along roadsides, railroad yards, waste places, dry fields, pastures and croplands.
Lonicera morrowii	Morrow's Honeysuckle	Readily invades open woodlands, old fields, and other disturbed sites. It can spread rapidly due to birds and mammals dispersing the seeds and can form a dense understory thicket which can restrict native plant growth and tree seedling establishment.
Lythrum salicaria	Purple Loosestrife	Very hardy perennial which can rapidly degrade wetlands, diminishing their value for wildlife habitat.
Myriophyllum aquaticum	Parrot feather	Dense mats of parrot's feather out-compete native species, decreasing local biodiversity. It can cause water to become stagnant, altering the chemical and physical characteristics of the aquatic ecosystem
Myriophyllum spicatum	Eurasian Water Milfoil	Eurasian watermilfoil can form thick underwater stands of tangled stems and vast mats of vegetation on the water's surface, especially in shallow, nutrient-rich water. These mats can limit boating, swimming, and fishing.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAMES (ENGLISH)	IMPACTS
Nymphoides peltata	Yellow Floating heart	In aquatic ecosystems, it can form dense mats of vegetation that shade or crowd out native aquatic plants. In extremely dense stands, it can cause the water to become stagnant, resulting in lower dissolved oxygen levels, which harm fish and other aquatic organisms.
Persicaria wallichii	Himalayan Knotweed	Aggressive plant with a strong root system that has been known to break through asphalt and concrete.
Phalaris arundinacea ssp. picta	Reed Canary Grass	The invasive species of Reed Canary Grass is also a threat to the native species of Reed Canary Grass, because it can hybridize with the native species, which causes a loss of genetic diversity for the native species.
Phragmites australis ssp. australis	Common Reed/Phragmites	Dense stands of Phragmites can also disrupt crop yields, leading to economic losses within the agriculture industry. Large stands can also affect property values due to aesthetic concerns. This is especially a problem for landowners on lakes and rivers, where Phragmites can impede a lake front view
Stratoides aloides	Water soldier	Sharp serrated leaf edges can cut swimmers and individuals who handle water soldier plants. Caution should be taken whenever handling the plant.
Tamarix ramosissima	Salt cedar, Tamarisk, 'Pink Cascade', 'Summer Glow'	Salt Cedar's extremely high-water usage lowers water tables to levels that can be below the root zone of native trees. It also excretes excess salts through leaf glands, killing plants that are intolerant of saline soils.
Trapa natans	Water Chestnut	Water chestnut fruits are often found along the shoreline and bottom of waterways - they have very sharp spines with barbs that can cause painful wounds when stepped on.

High Risk Invasive Plant Species

This list refers to species that are of high concern within Canada, and/or specific regions. These are high risk plants that you will want to consider avoiding or restricting their spread.

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAMES (ENGLISH)	IMPACTS
Aegopodium podagraria	Goutweed	As an invasive species, goutweed forms dense patches that displace native plants in the ground layer of an ecosystem.
Carum carvi	Wild Caraway	Though edible, it is not utilized by livestock and can quickly displace nearby vegetation where infestations go uncontrolled. Infestations in forage crops have led to weed seed dispersal in baled hay.
Centaurea cyanus	Bachelor's Button; Cornflower	Seedlings grow quickly, produce copious seed and readily invade dry meadows, fields and grasslands.
Daucus carota	Queen Anne's Lace; Wild carrot	Native of Europe and Asia, Queen Anne's lace invades disturbed dry agriculture land, abandoned fields, waste places, and road sides. It is a threat to recovering grasslands and can be persistent on clay soils.
Dipsacus fullonum	Common Teasel	The teasels form large dense stands that choke out desirable plant species. This can reduce forage, wildlife habitat, and species diversity.
Elaeagnus angustifolia	Russian Olive	Russian olive is highly resilient, withstanding cold and hot temperatures, growing back vigorously when cut down and fends off deer and other grazing animals with thorns and spikes. Ir out-competes native vegetation and has led to negative impacts on several native trees and plants.
Hedera helix	English Ivy	Quickly forms a dense monoculture groundcover that suppresses and excludes other vegetation, and is unsuitable for most wildlife habitat.
Impatiens glandulifera	Purple/Ornamental Jewelweed, Himalayan Balsam	An annual species that can aggressively replace native perennial plants along river banks, leading to soil erosion.
Rubus bifrons	Himalayan Blackberry	Himalayan blackberry out-competes low growing native vegetation through shading and build-up of leaf litter and dead stems. It can prevent the establishment of shade intolerant trees

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