



Cal-IPC

California Invasive Plant Council

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California Invasive Plant Council releases new guide for intrusive plants

Invasive plants can disrupt wildlife habitat, clog lakes and streams, and reduce oxygen levels for fish. To combat this, land managers and researchers now have a new tool to better understand the potential impacts of invasive species in California.

The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC), a statewide non-profit organization that works to protect California's natural areas from invasive plants, has released the new *California Invasive Plant Inventory*.

Invasive plants damage ecosystems around the world. They displace native species and change plant community structure. Invasive plants may disrupt physical ecosystem processes, such as fire regimes, sedimentation and erosion, light availability, and nutrient cycling. In aquatic ecosystems, invasive plants clog waterways and degrade habitat for birds and other wildlife. The impact is especially severe in California with its rich diversity of natural resources.

Cal-IPC's Inventory Review Committee met between 2002 and 2005 to review nearly 300 species with known or suspected impacts in California wildlands. The California Invasive Plant Inventory uses a set of 13 criteria to rate the invasive plant species. It bases the rating on a plant's impact on native habitats, potential for spreading in California, and current extent of invasion in the state. All of the information is backed up with published references or observations.

"The new list is a result of a tremendous amount of time and energy on the part of many people in California, Arizona and Nevada," says Joseph DiTomaso, Plant Sciences, UC Davis. "It should set the standard and provide a template for other states to use and develop their own lists.

The 44-page publication updates the 1999 *Exotic Pest Plants of Greatest Ecological Concern in California*, "The list differs from the previous one because it uses quantifiable criteria to evaluate more than 300 species of non-native plants reported to be invasive in California wildlands," says DiTomaso. "When it was all done, 192 species received either a high, moderate or limited ranking."

California is home to 4,200 native plant species, and is recognized internationally as a "biodiversity hotspot." Approximately 1,800 non-native plants also grow in the wild in the state. A small number of these are considered invasive by Cal-IPC. Improved understanding of their impacts will help those working to protect California's biodiversity.

The *California Invasive Plant Inventory* serves as a scientific and educational report designed to prioritize plants for control, to provide information to those working on habitat restoration, to show areas where research is needed, to aid those who prepare or comment on environmental planning documents, and to educate public policy makers.

Support for this project was provided by the Center for Invasive Plant Management and the UC Exotic/Invasive Pests and Diseases Research Program of the UC Statewide IPM Program and UC Riverside Center for Invasive Species Research. USDA/CREES Special Research Grant funds the Exotic/Invasive Pests and Diseases Research Program.

Note to editors: California Invasive Weeds Awareness Week is July 17-23, 2006; for more information, go to the California Invasive Plant Council Web site at www.cal-ipc.org.

About Cal-IPC

The California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) formed as a non-profit organization in 1992 to address the growing ecological and economic impacts caused by invasive plants in California's wildlands. They promote research, restoration, and education in pursuit of this goal. Cal-IPC is a membership organization with land managers, researchers, policy makers, and concerned citizens working together to protect the state's natural areas from invasive plants. Their web site is www.cal-ipc.org.

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