Gardens at Risk from Invasive Species

INVASIVE SPECIES are taking over our green spaces, dramatically increasing maintenance and decreasing aesthetic value.

Fortunately, gardeners play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasive species!

WHAT GARDENERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INVASIVES

- Invasive species are those nonnative plants, animals, and diseases that can cause harm to the economy, environment, and human health.
- Most introduced plants do not cause problems; however, those that do have significant economic and environmental costs.
- Invasive species pose a threat to Wisconsin’s urban forests which provide important environmental, social, and economic values such as reduced storm water run-off, improved air quality, energy conservation, improved public health, and increased property values.
- Invasive plants reproduce and grow quickly, easily invading adjacent green spaces, woodlands, and even landscaped areas.
- Invasive insects and diseases weaken and sometimes kill trees.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH GARDENERS?

- Invasive propagules, insects, and diseases can be introduced through plant swaps, farmers’ markets, and yard sales.
- Invasive species displace, weaken, or kill desirable plants resulting in loss of diversity; degrade wildlife habitat; interfere with recreational activities; disrupt urban ecosystems; and divert millions of dollars for their control.
- Some of the worst plant invaders were introduced as ornamentals or herbs.
- Weeding time and cost can increase due to invasive plants.

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Do not plant invasive species.
- Use garden materials that are free of invasive species and propagules, including wood chips or compost.
- Do not distribute, purchase, or sell known invasive species.
- Garden using plant materials that are site appropriate and less susceptible to damaging pests and diseases.
- Learn about invasive species.
- Remove soil, seeds, and vegetative matter from shoes, clothing, and tools prior to leaving an area.
- Properly dispose of invasive species or materials that may harbor invasive plant seeds. For example, disposal includes bagging for the landfill.
- Backyard compost piles and bins do not reliably generate enough heat for a long enough period of time to destroy weed seeds.

For more information on this and other Urban Forestry groups (landscapers, arborists, designers, growers and sellers.), visit the Urban Forestry Best Management Practices at: http://council.wisconsinfoesity.org/invasives/