

INVASIVE SPECIES

HOW TO IDENTIFY & MANAGE

What are Invasive Species?

Invasive species are non-native plants (and animals) that have negative effects on the economy, environment, and/or human health. Invasive plants can thrive in a variety of conditions, grow quickly, and spread, crowding out the desired species in your yards and native landscapes like prairies, wetlands, and forests. Similarly, weeds are plants that grow where they are not wanted. Many invasive species are considered noxious weeds, which Minnesota requires to be controlled or eradicated by landowners.

Invasive Species Impacts

Collectively, **invasive species are considered the second largest threat to biodiversity** after habitat loss. Invasive plants damage the natural heritage of our wetlands, prairies, forests, lakes, and rivers by harming native plants and animals. **If unmanaged, invasive plants limit land use and recreation opportunities** by:

- Limiting the establishment of tree seedlings and the regeneration of forests.
- Reducing the native plants habitats that wildlife depends on for food and cover.
- Changing ecosystem processes by promoting fires, increasing erosion, or changing soil nutrient availability.
- Reducing the forage area for grazing animals.
- Forming dense areas are challenging to walk through.
- Displacing native wildflowers by forming single-species stands.
- Producing sap or spines that can irritate human skin or are toxic to animals.





Identifying Invasive Species

You can minimize the impact of invasive species in your HOA community with early detection and rapid response.

There are a number of great resources for species identification, including the Minnesota DNR's List of invasive plants and how to identify and manage them, as well as plant identification apps like Seek by iNaturalist. **The earlier you can identify and start managing invasive species, the easier and cheaper it will be.** They will be smaller and have lower removal costs than a long-term control program once the species is established.

Some **common invasive plants** in Minnesota include buckthorn, Canada thistle, garlic mustard, Asian bush honeysuckle, and purple loosestrife.

Managing Invasive Species

Control of invasive plants is important to maintain a functioning ecosystem. There is no one fix, and the best approach is an integrated management plan for the specific site and species. Talk to a professional to determine which of the following control measures could be applied on your property:

- **Chemical control:** Use of herbicides to kill invasive plants.
- **Biological control:** Use of insects or pathogens to kill invasive plants.
- **Mechanical control:** Use of machinery or tools to mow, pull, or dig and remove or kill invasive plants.
- **Grazing:** Use of animals such as goats to eat invasive plants.
- **Prescribed burning:** Use of fire to kill invasive plants.

After killing weeds and invasive plants, leave at the infested site when possible to reduce spread and let them naturally decay. If necessary, properly contain and transport the materials to a disposal site that will accept and properly dispose of noxious weed materials.

Replace any killed or removed invasive plants with native plants. If soil is left disturbed following removal, invasive plants are likely to return.



Visit mnwcd.org/invasive-plants for more information and resources.

Work with your HOA board to create an invasive species management plan.

