

OIPC Assessment Protocol Policies & Procedures

Overview

These Policies & Procedures are intended to accompany the OIPC Assessment Protocol. This document represents practical measures for carrying out the assessment process in an equitable and conscientious manner reflecting the interests and input from various stakeholder groups.

Assessment Team

The five member assessment team will consist of a Chairperson appointed by the OIPC Board, two members representing conservation interests (such as land management and field botany) appointed by the OIPC Board, and two members representing the nursery industry recommended by the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association (ONLA) and appointed by the OIPC Board. The Chairperson should have research experience and be familiar with the invasive plant literature, a solid understanding of the OIPC Assessment Process and its development, a thorough understanding of the interests and expertise of groups represented in the process, and a proven ability to effectively administer and communicate science-based activities. Other team members should be selected based on their expertise within an applicable area and a willingness to serve a three-year, renewable term. Ideally, the Assessment Team should be comprised of professionals with expertise in one or more of the following areas: invasive plant biology, field botany, natural areas biology and/or ecology, management of natural areas, plant taxonomy, horticulture, horticultural research, and/or landscape design. All team members should be familiar with the "scientific method" and be willing to review and discuss research materials.

The Chairperson will have broad discretion in determining the timing and manner (electronic or face-to-face) of assessments, meetings and communications, conducting discussions and resolving any disputes among the team, and communicating with the OIPC Board. The team will meet at least twice a year, and preferably more frequently, depending upon the number of plants brought to their attention.

Any member may be removed at any time by a unanimous vote of the other members of the Assessment Team and approval of the OIPC Board. In this case, another member will be appointed within three months by the OIPC Board. No assessments will be determined in the interim.

Assessment Selections

Plants for assessment will be selected by the Assessment Team, based on suggestions from the OIPC constituency and Board, with prioritization recommended by the Assessment Team, and approved by the OIPC Board at their next board meeting. Any plant of interest can be assessed, including nursery production plants with significant potential for economic impact. Cultivars will automatically be considered within their parental taxa but can be assessed individually, if requested.

Following OIPC Board approval, names of plants scheduled to be assessed will be announced in January of that calendar year and posted on the OIPC website. Additional plants may also be added through the year, following the above process, depending on the need for review.

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Assessment Procedure

1. Assessment team members can independently run the plant through the assessment protocol or review assessments previously run, based on information from the scientific literature.
2. Chairperson requests detailed results from team members and assembles a summary.
3. Chairperson may, at his/her discretion, request that team members reassess the plant.
4. Chairperson reports scoring results to team members. Any discrepancy in the scores among team members will be examined closely on a question by question basis. The chairperson will have discretion to generate a consensus. The total score of the consensus indicates the *tentative determination*.
5. Sufficient time (preferably two months) will be provided at this stage for each team member to communicate, as needed, with his/her respective organization and solicit any additional available expertise.
6. One or more team members may offer objections to the scoring of one or more questions and request *re-assessment*.
7. Team members will re-assess the plant and report to the chairperson (time-frame established by Chairperson).
8. *Final consensus assessment* (scoring on each question and overall score) is reported to the Assessment Team by the Chairperson. The Chairperson then presents the assessments to the OIPC Board for approval. The OIPC President and Chairperson will communicate the approved assessments to the ONLA leadership.
9. Newly assessed species will be posted on the OIPC website for public comment for a six-month period. All comments should be addressed to the Chairperson. Unless sufficient science-based comments are received that warrant reconsideration of the assessment (as requested by three or more Team Members), the plant will be added to the appropriate 'list' at the completion of the comment period. A majority of the Assessment Team will need to approve of any changes, resulting in a request for approval of the revised assessment by the OIPC Board.
10. Plants 'listed' by the Assessment Team will be communicated to the general public through the OIPC website and email list, as well as other appropriate media outlets:
 - a. List of plants assessed as Invasive
 - b. List of all plants that were assessed, including their total numerical score and individual scores to each question
11. Any plant assessed as having Insufficient Data or Potentially Invasive should be reassessed later, ideally within three to five assessment periods, or when new information becomes available.

Assessment Status and Determinations

- Assessed: Insufficient Data
- Assessed: Not Currently Invasive in Ohio
- Assessed: Potentially Invasive
- Assessed: Invasive
- Currently under assessment
- To be assessed

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Assessment Communications

Notice of plants to be assessed
(as a group...annually)

Posted on the OIPC website in January

Notice of Comment Period

Announced on OIPC website

Notice of Assessment determination
To stakeholder groups
(as a group...annually)

OIPC Board communicates to ONLA & other partners
Posted on OIPC Website

Modified 8/21/2012, 12/7/2013
Approved by OIPC Board 3/4/2014
Revised 10/1/2020