



Invasive Plant List Work Group seeks participants for a new project

As awareness of biological invasions grows, so does the need to apply clear, consistent evaluation criteria and to share information across political boundaries. Like many states, Ohio has not yet adopted a rigorous scientific methodology to evaluate the effects of invasive, non-native plants which are established and spreading in natural habitats. The current list of Ohio's invasive plants is based upon the experience of many Ohio land managers and biologists. A handful of protocols are used in the United States to rank invasive species in natural systems. This OIPC work group will review and test several nationally-recognized invasive plant ranking systems to find the best fit for Ohio's plant listing needs.

Goals of the Invasive Plant List Criteria Review:

1. Review the major protocols used in the U.S. and adopt a clearly-defined, uniform methodology to categorize non-native invasive plants which threaten natural habitats in Ohio.
2. Provide a flexible method which can scale up to include adjoining states, or scale down to address ecological regions within Ohio, and which conforms to current national data management standards.

Outcomes of the proposed 2-year project:

1. Build a strong, collaborative partnership among stakeholders.
2. Adopt objective criteria and practical field methodology to evaluate and categorize invasive plant species.
3. Select and field test a prioritized subset of reported invasive plant species, which may include early detection/watch category species, species in commercial trade, and cultivars of invasive ornamentals.

Future phases of the project will include the development of and funding support for the data set, a broad range of educational materials, and a formal review committee and list revision process.

The work group requires the expertise of plant ecologists, botanists, land managers, green industry professionals, data managers, and naturalists. We are seeking participants with a sincere, sustained interest in the project's goals and outcomes, who can lend the necessary expertise, and keep the project moving forward. Some time commitments may vary according to the project phase and tasks. Time and resources contributed will be used for matching grants, if applicable.

To join the work group, or for more information, please contact Jennifer Hillmer at The Holden Arboretum, 440-602-3824, jhillmer@holdenarb.org, or visit www.opic.info.