



# OIPC 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN: 2020-2024

Completed in June 2020

## SUMMARY AND HISTORY

The Ohio Invasive Plants Council is a coalition of organizations and individuals throughout Ohio who have a mutual interest in Ohio's natural ecosystems and the effects of invasive plants and other organisms on their biological diversity. This is an ongoing statewide effort to bring together professionals and citizens concerned with the introduction, spread, and control of invasive, non-native plant species in Ohio's natural areas and landscapes.

Statewide coordination began in 1998 through 2000 by the ODNR Division of Natural Areas & Preserves with the development and presentation of two workshop series to raise general public awareness of invasive plants and to share technical information for land management professionals. In 2001, an informal statewide network, the Ohio Invasive Plants Working Group, began to meet periodically to discuss and cooperate on various topics, including education and outreach about invasive plants, management and removal issues, coordination with similar statewide groups, and hosting a conference in March 2004 on research and management of invasive plants. In the spring of 2004, a steering committee was formed to lay the groundwork and make recommendations for the formal incorporation of a statewide invasive plants council. In early 2005, the first Board of Directors was elected. The group incorporated with 501c(3) nonprofit status with corporate regulations and Articles of Incorporation as the Ohio Invasive Plants Council.

The Council's mission and purpose is similar to those of other state or regional invasive plant councils, often called Exotic Pest Plant Councils (EPPC). There is also a National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils (NAEPPC) and OIPC is the Ohio chapter of that association. OIPC also works closely with the Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN), which is also a chapter of NAEPPC. All of the councils are concerned with promoting awareness and information exchange about invasive species issues, sharing technical information, encouraging research, and detecting or preventing new invasions into natural ecosystems.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Ohio Invasive Plants Council coordinates statewide efforts and direction to address the threats of invasive species to Ohio's ecosystems and economy by providing leadership and promoting stewardship, education, research, and information exchange.

### The purposes of OIPC are:

- a) To raise public awareness about the spread and impact of invasive species, such as effects on the integrity of plant communities and ecosystem services;
- b) To facilitate the exchange of information concerning management, control, inventory, and monitoring of invasive species;
- c) To serve as an educational, advisory and technical support council for all aspects of invasive plant species;
- d) To develop, maintain and publish a council-reviewed list of invasive plant species and their cultivars based on a scientific protocol;
- e) To develop, maintain, and publish a council-reviewed list of non-invasive alternative plant species;
- f) To promote actions to prevent future introductions of new invasive plant species.

- g) To coordinate activities and information exchange with other invasive species groups;
- h) To provide forums for all interested parties to discuss issues relating to invasive species.

## **GOAL 1**

**Goal 1: Cooperative Policy Development – To develop and maintain plant lists regarding invasive plants and their alternatives, and to promote actions to discourage future introductions of new invasive plants in Ohio.**

### **Action Items:**

1. Continue to use the Ohio invasive plant assessment protocol developed by OIPC, with revisions by the OIPC board and assessment team as needed. Assessments will be carried out by the assessment team, following the OIPC assessment protocol policies and procedures. The list will be revised annually based on additional assessments completed. This transparent process will include posting all the supporting documentation on the OIPC website.
2. Promote and share the annually updated OIPC assessment list with multiple stakeholders including relevant agencies and organizations involved with invasive plants. Reformat the list of invasive plants in a second version which is more user-friendly and educational.
3. Amend and update the OIPC alternatives brochure in conjunction with updates to the website and the existing alternatives list.
4. Provide leadership to the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and other appropriate stakeholders on the regulation of invasive plants in Ohio, including annual recommendations to ODA for additional plants for the regulated list.

## **GOAL 2**

**Goal 2: Research & Education - To promote awareness of invasive plant issues, facilitate research and information exchange on invasive plants, serve as an educational, advisory, and technical support avenue, and provide educational workshops, programs, and materials on invasive plants.**

### **Action Items:**

1. Identify research questions that are priorities for the listing and management of invasive plants in Ohio. These questions should include, but not be limited to, knowledge gaps that need to be filled in order to complete the OIPC assessment of species for invasive status. Disseminate these questions and encourage research on them in Ohio.
2. Promote the use of apps for handheld devices that document localities of invasive species, possibly focusing on a few species for which improved information on current distribution is critical to assess invasive status or to aid management. Promote the aggregation and dissemination of existing data concerning invasive plants in Ohio.
3. Maintain a small grants program to support research on invasive plants. This program will prioritize work conducted by students, researchers, or land managers on projects of high priority for assessment of invasive status and/or effective management.

4. Hold annual meetings to provide a forum for exchange of ideas and information, networking, management, and research on invasive plants.
5. Hold triennial research conferences that highlight invasive plant research in Ohio and surrounding states, and encourage communication between researchers and land managers.
6. Conduct coordinated workshops and programs around the state to educate interested public, land managers, agencies, gardeners, landscape architects, private landowners, and others about invasive plants, control techniques, alternative species, and other issues of relevance.
7. Publish a quarterly newsletter about relevant invasive plant issues that will be disseminated electronically to the OIPC listserv, as well as posted on the OIPC website.
8. Update the OIPC educational tabletop display regularly for use at events and prepare a Power Point presentation on invasive plants in Ohio that can be shared with other groups, when requested. Update the current 18 OIPC fact sheets and add more species; the fact sheets should be available as hard copies and electronically.

### **GOAL 3**

**Goal 3: Organizational Advancement & Statewide Coordination - Expand the Council's influence using financial stability, outreach, and increased participation to continue to be a sustainable, strong leader in statewide invasive plant issues.**

#### **Action Items:**

1. Develop income to cover the costs of projects as needed to implement this plan:
  - a) Identify potential sources of foundation, gift, and grant support;
  - b) Establish a donation option on the OIPC website so interested people may make donations to support our efforts. Describe what activities OIPC needs donations for (e.g., brochures, displays, research grants, conferences).
  - c) Continue to cultivate a financial support system of sponsors throughout the state who are willing to support OIPC events, such as workshops, Annual Meetings, and Research Conferences.
2. Raise the profile of OIPC as the recognized authority on invasive plants in Ohio:
  - a) Engage the OIPC Board Advisory Committee and subcommittees regularly on specific projects to continue efforts and contributions which accomplish Council goals and purposes.
  - b) Continue to enhance the OIPC website ([www.oipc.info](http://www.oipc.info)), so that it highlights the invasive plant list (including supporting documents), non-invasive alternatives, resources on identification, management, and impacts of invasive plant species, the OIPC newsletter, and timely posting of upcoming events.
  - c) Make awards, such as research grants and annual awards of recognition, to acknowledge valuable contributions, encourage action by others, gain more information on invasive plants, and increase the visibility of OIPC.

3. Increase outreach and statewide coordination efforts to reach additional constituents and interested groups.
  - a) Explore options for using social media (e.g., Facebook, YouTube videos) to promote OIPC events, activities, and resources.
  - b) Participate in cooperative efforts with relevant Ohio groups involved in invasive plant issues, including OSU Extension, existing as well as developing regional CWMA (Cooperative Weed Management Areas), state and Federal agencies, non-profit organizations, Master Gardeners, garden clubs, and native plant groups so that activities are complementary or synergistic rather than redundant.
  - c) Maintain participation lists for events and the OIPC listserv to keep an up-to-date list of partners and constituents.
  - d) Expand outreach efforts and promote invasive plant awareness to interested groups and the general public including private landowners, landscape architects, civic/public garden centers, universities, Master Gardeners, and Certified Volunteer Naturalists, through workshops, promotional materials, and social media.
  - e) Plan one relevant activity or PSA each year during National Invasive Species Awareness Week in February.