

Invasive Plant Species

Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Botanic Gardens & Arboreta

Endorsed by American Public Gardens Association, February 2002

- Conduct an institution-wide review examining all departments and activities that provide opportunities to stem the proliferation of invasive species and inform visitors. For example, review or write a collections policy that addresses this issue; examine such activities as seed sales, plant sales, book store offerings, wreath-making workshops, etc.
- Avoid introducing invasive plants by establishing an invasive plant assessment procedure. Predictive risk assessments are desirable, and should also include responsible monitoring on the garden site or through partnerships with other institutions. Institutions should be aware of both direct and indirect effects of plant introduction, such as biological interference in gene flow, disruption of pollinator relationships, etc.
- Consider removing invasive species from plant collections. If a decision is made to retain an invasive plant, ensure its control and provide strong interpretation to the public explaining the risk and its function in the garden.
- Seek to control harmful invasive species in natural areas managed by the garden and assist others in controlling them on their property, when possible.
- Promote non-invasive alternative plants or, when possible, help develop non-invasive alternatives through plant selection or breeding.
- If your institution participates in seed or plant distribution, including through Index Seminum, do not distribute known invasive plants except for bona-fide research purposes, and consider the consequences of distribution outside your biogeographic region. Consider a statement of caution attached to species that appear to be potentially invasive but have not been fully evaluated.
- Increase public awareness about invasive plants. Inform why they are a problem, including the origin, mechanisms of harm, and need for prevention and control. Work with the local nursery and seed industries to assist the public in environmentally safe gardening and sales. Horticulture education programs, such as those at universities, should also be included in education and outreach efforts. Encourage the public to evaluate what they do in their own practices and gardens.
- Participate in developing, implementing, or supporting national, regional, or local early warning systems for immediate reporting and control. Participate also in the creation of regional lists of concern.
- Botanical gardens should try to become informed about invasiveness of their species in other biogeographic regions, and this information should be compiled and shared in a manner accessible to all.
- Become partners with other organizations in the management of harmful invasive species.

Follow all laws on importation, exportation, quarantine, and distribution of plant materials across political boundaries, including foreign countries. Be sensitive to conventions and treaties that deal with this issue, and encourage affiliated organizations (plant societies, garden clubs, etc.) to do the same.