

Invasive Species

An invasive species is an organism that grows and spreads quickly due to its ability to adapt to a variety of growing conditions. Often, invasive species are non-native, and therefore lack predators to control their population size. Due to their aggressiveness, invasive species pose a threat to our natural environment by outcompeting and damaging native species and lowering overall biodiversity. Invasive plants can lower biodiversity so greatly that they create a monotypic community where the invasive is the only plant growing.



Invasive periwinkle is often sold as ground cover. Common Bearberry is a good native alternative

Human Impact

Although species introductions and range expansions have occurred throughout history, human activity has accelerated the long-distance transport of non-native organisms. Non-native plants are

sometimes brought into a new area intentionally as ornamentals or for medicinal uses. These plants may later escape and grow out of control. Invasive species are also unintentionally transported to new locations in the ballasts of ships, in animal fodder and packing materials or

Summary

Conservation Halton's viewpoint on the subject of invasive species outlines how we can reduce human impact on the spread of invasive species and how to garden responsibly with native plants.

through recreational activities such as fishing, boating and hiking. It is important to be aware of invasive species, and clean all seeds and soil from boots and equipment before moving to a different site. When engaged in water recreation, it is best to let equipment dry in the sun and remain dry for five days before moving to a new location.

Responsible Gardening

It is important to always garden responsibly. Be aware of plants known to be invasive, and if you are unsure, research species before planting. Be aware of the term “wildflower” since many wildflowers are non-native and may be invasive. Also, be cautious of plants advertised as “groundcovers.” It is advisable to avoid the common groundcover Periwinkle (*Vinca major* or *minor*), as this is an invasive species of high concern in Halton’s watersheds. A good native alternative to periwinkle is Common Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*).

- Conservation Halton supports educated and responsible gardening. Never plant invasive species! If unsure, always confirm identification with an expert.

Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)



Aquariums

It is important to never release or flush the contents of an aquarium or water garden into a natural waterway, sewer or ditch. Instead, dispose of plants on dry land where they

will not wash into a nearby watercourse. Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*) is a common aquarium plant that is non-native to Halton. If released into the natural environment, fanwort will grow aggressively, smothering native vegetation. Purchasing native plants for a household aquarium is a good alternative.

Fishing Tips

Always dispose of bait properly. Bait buckets should never be dumped into a lake, river or stream. Instead, unused bait should be salted and frozen or disposed of in the garbage. It is important to follow regulations and only use legal bait species. Round goby (*Apollonia melanostoma*), for example, is illegal bait. Round gobies are invasive bottom feeders that multiply quickly and have the ability to alter water quality and out compete native species. It is important to never dump the contents of a bait bucket into a lake, river or stream, and never dip your bait bucket into a body of water if it contains water from another source.

Always clean hiking or boating equipment when moving between different sites. Remember to drain water from your boat, livewell and bilge before moving to a new location.

Do not transfer fish from one body of water to another. Unauthorized fish introductions have the potential to severely reduce the biodiversity of isolated inland lakes.

Want to Learn More?

- Knowledge is key! Stay informed about invasive species in our Region and report sightings to Conservation Halton.
- Conservation Halton has published a number of informative fact sheets on the major invasive plant species in our watershed. Please contact Conservation Halton for more information.

Conservation Halton

Natural Champion for a Healthy Watershed



Conservation Halton is the community based environmental agency that protects, restores and manages the natural resources in its watershed. Conservation Halton has staff that includes ecologists, land use planners, engineers, foresters and educators, along with a network of volunteers, who are guided by a Board of Directors that includes municipally elected and appointed citizens. Conservation Halton is recognized for its stewardship of creeks, forests and Niagara Escarpment lands through science based programs and services.

For more information on Invasive Species contact Conservation Halton:

www.conservationhalton.ca

2596 Britannia Rd W RR2 Milton, ON L9T 2X6 t 905.336.1158 f 905.336.7014 e-mail admin@hrca.on.ca