

INVASIVE SPECIES IN ILLINOIS

What is an invasive species?

Invasive alien species are plants, animals, or other organisms that are introduced to a given area outside their original range and cause harm in their new home. Because they have no natural enemies to limit their reproduction, they usually spread rampantly. Invasive alien species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose enormous costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human enterprises, as well as to human health.

- The cost to control invasive species and the damages they inflict upon property and natural resources in the U.S. is estimated at **\$137 billion** annually.



Invasive Species in Illinois: A Quick Look

Illinois has been invaded by a number of harmful exotic plants and animals. Here is a quick look at some of the worst current and potential invaders:

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Zebra mussel	Mollusk	Caspian Sea region of Asia; accidentally released into Lake St. Clair in 1988 in ship ballast water	Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio Rivers, Lake Michigan & 20 other lakes	Voracious filter feeders that out-compete native animals; fouls boats & clogs intake pipes at power plants and municipal water sources
Dutch elm disease	Fungus	Asia; one strain of the disease arrived in the 1930s in Cleveland, OH on infected elm logs from Europe; a more virulent strain arrived in 1940s	American elm originally ranged in all states east of Rockies- most of this area is infested	Elms were once the nation's most popular urban street tree, have now largely disappeared from both urban and forested landscapes. It is estimated that "Dutch" elm disease has killed over 100 million trees.
Gypsy moth	Insect	Europe; imported for silk production to East Coast, escaped captivity in 1860s	Found primarily in northeastern Illinois; Lake County was quarantined	Serious defoliator of oaks and other forest and urban trees; biological controls have been fairly successful against it
Pine Shoot Beetle	Insect	Europe; first detected in the U.S. in a Christmas tree farm in Ohio in 1992	Present in parts of 12 states in the Midwest and East Coast	Attacks new shoots of pine trees, stunting their growth; may also attack stressed pine trees by breeding beneath the bark at their base
Soybean Aphid	Insect	Asia; first detected in the U.S. in 2000	Found in Wisconsin, Michigan, no. Illinois, & ea. Minnesota	Capable of extensive damage to soybeans and also a vector of a number of plant virus diseases

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Garlic mustard	Weed	Europe; brought by settlers as a vitamin-rich winter herb	Ranges from Canada, south to Virginia and west to Kansas and Nebraska	Grows earlier in spring than native plants, allowing it to dominate forest understory and crowd out natives

What Congress Can Do:

A. Make Prevention Our Top Priority

- Reverse current U.S. policy on the intentional import of live plants and animals, that is, switch from a “dirty” to a “clean” list approach that requires screening for invasiveness before import and which keeps out or limits import of species so as to prevent harm to native species or ecosystems – and make the legislative changes to do so.
- Substantially cut the unintentional introduction of aquatic invaders by overseeing federal standard-setting on the discharge of ballast water in the United States, supporting the development of technology to meet these standards; ensuring that agencies monitor and enforce compliance; and reauthorizing the 1996 National Invasive Species Act in the strongest and most comprehensive form.
- When considering, reviewing, or approving trade agreements, rigorously address invasive species, e.g., by allowing for restriction of imports of non-native species that are invasive elsewhere and by identifying pathways by which inadvertent introductions travel so that they may be interrupted.

B. Make Federal Agencies More Effective

- Use oversight authority to ensure that all federal agencies immediately and strongly implement that part of Executive Order 13112 that asks them to identify and reduce actions that introduce or spread invasive species in the United States or elsewhere.
- Appropriate adequate funds so that federal agencies have the resources to address invasive species problems promptly and comprehensively over the long-term.
- Strengthen the structure and leadership of the National Invasive Species Council and prompt more aggressive implementation of its National Management Plan.
- Oversee the work of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to ensure that the agency and its Administrator are committed to protecting biological diversity as well as agriculture.
- Evaluate the serious problems with border inspection for pests, weeds, and pathogens, e.g., in staffing and cross-department coordination, exacerbated by moving these functions into the Department of Homeland Security and amend its authorizing legislation if needed.

References:

How to Identify and Manage Dutch Elm Disease. http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_ded/ht_ded.htm#intro

USGS Zebra Mussel Page. <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/taxgroup/mollusks/zebramusel/>

Illinois DA Gypsy Moth Fact Sheet <http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/Pest/gypsymoth.html>

USDA APHIS Pine Shoot Beetle Fact Sheet <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ispm/psb/background.html>

National Plant Board Plant Pest Issues Soybean Aphid

<http://www.nationalplantboard.org/issues.html#Inula%20Pest%20Alert>

NPS Garlic Mustard Fact Sheet <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/alpe1.htm>

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