

Urban Forests at Risk from Invasive Species



INVASIVE SPECIES are taking over our urban forests, dramatically increasing maintenance costs and decreasing the benefits our community trees provide.

Urban foresters and arborists play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasive species.

WHAT URBAN FORESTERS AND ARBORISTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INVASIVES

- Invasive species are those nonnative plants, animals, and diseases that can cause harm to the economy, environment, and human health.
- Most introduced plants do not cause problems; however, those that do have significant economic and environmental costs.
- Invasive species pose a threat to Wisconsin's urban forests which provide important environmental, social, and economic values such as reduced storm water run-off, improved air quality, energy conservation, improved public health, and increased property values.
- Invasive plants reproduce and grow quickly, easily invading adjacent natural areas, woodlands, and even landscaped areas.
- Invasive insects and diseases weaken and sometimes kill trees.

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH URBAN FORESTERS AND ARBORISTS?

- Invasive propagules, insects, and diseases can be moved by your activities, including wood and chip disposal.
- Invasive species displace, weaken, or kill desirable plants resulting in loss of diversity; degrade wildlife habitat; interfere with recreational activities; disrupt urban ecosystems; and divert millions of dollars for their control.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Scout for invasive species and plan activities to limit their introduction and spread.
- Do not plant invasive species.
- Educate people you interact with about invasive species.
- Select diverse species of trees and other planting materials within the context of your project.
- Use plant materials that are site appropriate and less susceptible to damaging pests and diseases.
- Avoid the use of wood chips and compost that may contain invasive propagules.
- Avoid unnecessary soil disturbance.
- Minimize the offsite transport of materials that may contain invasives.
- Minimize the movement of invasive species to non-infested areas during management activities.
- Prior to relocating equipment, remove soil and debris by scraping, brushing, or washing.
- Remove soil, seeds, and other debris from shoes, clothing, and tools prior to leaving an area.
- Reduce the introduction of insects and diseases by avoiding unnecessary wounding of trees and other vegetation.