Urban Landscapes at Risk from Invasive Species

INVASIVE SPECIES are taking over our urban landscapes dramatically increasing maintenance costs, as well as damaging valuable wildlife habitat.

Fortunately, landscapers play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasive species!

WHAT LANDSCAPERS 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 landscapes 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 LANDSCAPERS?

- Invasive propagules, insects, and diseases can be moved on equipment, landscaping materials, and other debris.
- Invasive species displace, weaken, or kill desirable plants resulting in loss of diversity; interfere with recreational activities; disrupt urban ecosystems; and divert millions of dollars for their control.
- Some of the worst plant invaders were introduced as ornamentals.
- Weeding time and cost can increase due to invasive plants.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Plan activities to limit the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Limit the introduction and spread of invasives during site preparation activities.
- Do not plant invasive species.
- Educate clients and staff about invasive species.
- Minimize the movement of invasive species to non-infested areas during activities.
- Minimize soil disturbance.
- Stabilize disturbed soils quickly to prevent the establishment of invasive speices.
- Use landscape materials that are free of invasive species and propagules, such as wood chips or compost.
- 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.
- Avoid unnecessary wounding of trees and vegetation to reduce susceptibility to diseases and insects.

For more information on this and other Urban Forestry groups (designers, arborists, gardeners, growers and sellers.), visit the Urban Forestry Best Management Practices at: http://council.wisconsinforestry.org/invasives/