

# INVASIVE SPECIES IN OREGON

## 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.
- One invasive plant, leafy spurge, has been documented to decrease ranchland values by up to 83% in Oregon.

## Invasive Species in Oregon: A Quick Look

Oregon 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
Diffuse knapweed	Plant	Asia Minor and Balkans; probably arrived as a contaminant in alfalfa	3.21 million acres in OR, WA, ID, MT and BC	Unpalatable to livestock, spines can damage their mouths and digestive tracts; outcompetes and excludes native vegetation
English Ivy	Vine	Native to temperate Europe and Asia, first documented in North America 1727 as an ornamental	Infests thousands of acres of parks and wildlands, including Forest Park in Portland	Chokes out native plants and tree seedlings, smothers large trees, provides poorer wildlife habitat than the species it replaces, can damage buildings and increase erosion on slopes.
Sudden Oak Death	Fungus	Possibly Europe, first detected in California in 1995	Presence in Curry County led to quarantine	Kills oaks, rhododendron, maples, viburnum, camellias and many other species – could devastate forests as well as landscaped areas
Yellow starthistle	Plant	Mediterranean region and Asia	Infests over 150,000 acres in Oregon	Decreases rangeland value and poisons horses, outcompetes native plants
Feral pig	Mammal	Europe, introduced deliberately in CA as a game animal	Confirmed in 9 OR counties, in danger of permanent establishment	Devour crops, vineyards, orchard fruit, damage fences, compete with native wildlife and carry several wildlife & livestock diseases
European green crab	Crustacean	Europe and North Africa; arrived in San Francisco Bay in 1990	Established all along coastal Oregon	Feeds on clams, oysters, mussels & crabs, including young Dungeness crabs

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Codling moth	Insect	Europe; introduced by settlers over 200 years ago	Problematic in all fruit-growing areas in OR	Major pest of pear and apple orchards in Oregon. OR orchard growers use 306,900 pounds of insecticide annually to control it.

## 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.

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