

# INVASIVE SPECIES IN WISCONSIN

## 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.



Garlic Mustard (NPS)

## Invasive Species in Wisconsin: A Quick Look

Wisconsin 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	Lake Michigan & 43 other lakes, Mississippi & St. Croix Rivers	Voracious filter feeders that out-compete native animals; fouls boats & clogs intake pipes at power plants and municipal water sources
Buckthorn (common & glossy)	Shrub or small tree	Eurasia; deliberately introduced as an ornamental, planted in WI in 1849	Southern and eastern WI, particularly problematic in oak woods in southwest WI	This thorny shrub forms impenetrable thickets in the understory, shades out native tree seedlings, and is poor habitat for wildlife
Gypsy moth	Insect	Europe; imported to Massachusetts for silk production, escaped captivity in 1860s	First detected in WI in 1970s, now found in nearly every county	Serious defoliator of oaks and other forest and urban trees; biological controls have been fairly successful against it
Soybean Aphid	Insect	Asia; first detected in the U.S. in 2000	Found in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, & Minnesota	Capable of extensive damage to soybeans and also a vector of a number of plant virus diseases
Garlic mustard	Weed	Europe; brought by settlers as a vitamin-rich winter herb	Ranges from Canada, south to Virginia and west to KS & NE	Grows earlier in spring than native plants, allowing it to dominate forest understory and crowd out natives
Asian Carp (Bighead, Black, Silver)	Fish	Asia; introduced in the late 1880s for aquaculture purposes	Present in water bodies of 63 WI counties	Voracious eaters that out-compete native species for food resources; silver carp pose physical danger to boaters due to their leaping abilities

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Emerald ash borer	Beetle	Asia; discovered in Michigan in 2002	Not yet found in WI, but has high potential to invade	Lethal to ash trees! You can help keep this pest out of Wisconsin by not transporting firewood or nursery items from infested areas, and by reporting any sign of infestation to 1-800-462-2803

## 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:

Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin’s Buckthorn Page. <http://www.ipaw.org/invaders/buckthorn/index.htm>

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>

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

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Page. <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/>

WI DNR’s Asian Carp Page. [http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/fact/asian\\_carp.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/fact/asian_carp.htm)

WI DNR’s Emerald Ash Borer Page. <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/Forestry/FH/Ash/index.html>

WI DNR’s Gypsy Moth Page. <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/Forestry/FH/gm/index.htm>

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