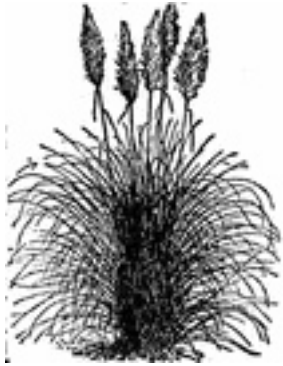


VOLUNTARY CODES OF CONDUCT FOR NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS



Despite its reputation as a grassland invader, pampas grass is still being sold. Even so-called sterile varieties have the potential to be invasive.

Invasive Plants are a Threat to:

- Public parklands
- Farms and ranchlands
- Creeks and rivers
- Bays and estuaries
- Fire safety
- Native plants
- Wildlife
- Woodlands and wetlands

What Every Horticulture Professional Needs to Know About Invasive Plants

While most horticultural species brought to California from elsewhere in the world have not proven to be a threat to natural areas, a few species have spread aggressively to native habitats.

About half of the plants that have invaded California's natural areas have escaped from yards and gardens. These weeds are wreaking havoc in our public lands, natural and agricultural areas.

Some plants do not stay where we put them. A few species, such as pampas grass, periwinkle, and English ivy escape into natural areas. Their seeds and roots

are carried to neighboring lands and waters by wind, water, and wildlife. New populations become established that degrade the environment.

Variiously called weeds, introduced, alien, or exotic, these non-native plants are highly invasive.

Next to habitat destruction from inappropriate development, the greatest threat to our native plants and wildlife comes from invasive species. Members of the horticulture industry can play a critical role in preventing their spread.

Understanding the Problem

Plant introduction and improvement are the foundation of modern agriculture and horticulture, yielding diversity to our supply of plants used for food, landscapes, and gardens.

A small proportion of introduced plant species are invasive and cause unwanted impacts to natural systems and biological diversity, as well as economies, recreation, and health.

Invasive plants spread into natural areas where they displace native plants and wildlife. These weeds disrupt ecosystem patterns and processes, such as soil chemistry, fire frequency, natural succession, and hydrology.

Weeds interfere with outdoor recreation by crowding out the diverse blend of plants and wildlife that people come to see and enjoy. In our bays and estuaries, invasive weeds damage habitat for fish and shellfish.

Invasive vines strangle trees in our yards and parks. Other weeds reduce crop and forage yields. Along public roads and highways, invasive plants increase maintenance costs, fire hazard, and can restrict visibility.

By reducing biological diversity, burdening agriculture, tourism, fisheries, and outdoor recreation industries, invasive plants are inflicting serious economic and ecological damage.

The Marin/Sonoma Weed Management Area (MSWMA) was formed by county, state, federal, city agencies, non-profit organizations, private industry and individuals concerned about invasive plant species in Marin and Sonoma counties.

For additional information on invasives and their alternatives for landscaping please visit:

www.marinsonomaweed-management.org
(no hyphen)

or contact:

Marin County Ag Commissioner's Office 415-499-6700

Sonoma County Ag Commissioner's Office 707-565-2371

Marin County U.C. Cooperative Extension 415-499-4204

Sonoma County U.C. Cooperative Extension 707-565-2621

Invasive Plant Websites

www.cal-ipc.org

www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu

Voluntary Codes of Conduct

In 2001, representatives of the American Nursery and Landscape Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta, The Nature Conservancy, and Garden Club of America developed draft codes of conduct for slowing the spread of invasive plants.

Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Nursery Professionals (Excerpts)

- Ensure that invasive potential is assessed prior to introducing and marketing plant species new to California. Invasive potential should be assessed by the introducer or qualified experts using emerging risk assessment methods that consider plant characteristics and prior observations or experience with the plant elsewhere in the world. Additional insights may be gained through extensive monitoring on the nursery site prior to further distribution.
- Work with regional experts and stakeholders to determine which species are either currently invasive or will become invasive. Identify plants that could be alternatives in your region.
- Develop and promote alternative plant material through plant selection and breeding.
- Where agreement has been reached among nursery associations, government, academia, and ecology and conservation organizations, phase-out existing stocks of those specific invasive species where they are considered to be a threat.
- Follow all laws on importation and quarantine of plant materials across political boundaries.
- Encourage customers to use, and garden writers to promote, non-invasive plants.

Voluntary Codes of Conduct for Landscape Professionals (Excerpts)

- Seek out education and information on invasive species issues. Work with plant ecologists, horticulturists, nurseries, botanic gardens, conservation organizations, and others to determine what species in your region either are currently highly invasive or show aggressive potential. Investigate species under consideration that may present a threat.
- Identify and specify non-invasive species that are aesthetically and horticulturally suitable alternatives to invasive species in your region.
- Eliminate specification of species that are invasive in your region.
- Be aware of potential environmental impacts beyond the designed and managed area of the landscape plan (e.g. plants may spread to adjacent natural area or cropland).
- Encourage nurseries and other suppliers to provide landscape contractors and the public with non-invasive plants.
- Collaborate with other local experts and agencies in the development and revision of local landscape ordinances. Promote inclusion of invasive species issues in these ordinances.

Best Management Practices

- Use native vegetation to the maximum extent possible.
- Limit the use of fertilizers. Over-fertilizing encourages invasive weeds.
- Clean vehicles and equipment to avoid transporting seeds and other reproductive plant parts. Dispose of weed materials properly.
- Prevent the introduction and spread of weeds caused by moving infested soil, mulch, gravel, sand, borrow, and fill materials. Minimize soil disturbance.
- Encourage invasive weed management to homeowners and other landowners.