

WEED SCIENCE
SOCIETY OF AMERICA



WSSA

For Immediate Release

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National Invasive Species Awareness Week Promotes Education and Involvement

LAWRENCE, Kansas – February 16, 2015 – National Invasive Species Awareness Week is scheduled for February 22-28, and experts with the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) say it is more important than ever for each of us to get involved.

“Damage caused by invasive weeds causes a multibillion dollar annual drain on our nation’s economy,” says Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D., WSSA science policy director. “If each of us stays informed and commits to taking action, we can focus on prevention and can detect new infestations early to limit their impact.”

Many invasive plants – such as water hyacinth and Scotch broom – were first introduced to the U.S. from other countries as ornamentals. Unfortunately they became aggressive weedy invaders in their new habitat, often spread by unsuspecting humans, their pets and outdoor gear.

This year there are lots of options for taking part in National Invasive Species Awareness Week and improving your own understanding of invasive weed species and how you can help.

ATTEND AN EVENT. You can visit www.nisaw.org to find local awareness week events. You also can register for any of the national-level activities planned in Washington, D.C., including:

- **An awards ceremony** recognizing individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions to the prevention and control of invasive species (February 25). Honorees include: Al Confrancesco of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Research

and Development Center; Robert McMahon of the University of Texas; Gordon Brown, retired from the National Invasive Species Council; Steve Kendrot of USDA's APHIS Wildlife Services; Cathy Lucero of the Clallam County Noxious Weed Control Board in Washington State; and Bob Wiltshire of the Invasive Species Action Network.

- **A fair** on the patio of the USDA's Whitten Building that will be staffed by federal agencies, states and nongovernmental organizations to highlight invasive species programs (February 25).
- **A congressional reception** organized by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies at the Rayburn House Office Building (February 25).
- **Invasive Species Day** at the National Museum of Natural History, with activities for kids of all ages (February 28).

PARTICIPATE IN A WEBINAR. More than a dozen free webinars are planned to raise awareness of invasive species and to offer tips for prevention, early detection, rapid response and control. Topics range from "The Art of Detection" to "Management of Invasive Aquatic Hydrilla." A full list of topics and links for registration are available at www.nisaw.org.

DO SOME RESEARCH. To celebrate National Invasive Species Awareness Week on your own, get on the Internet and explore information on invaders in your state, county or region. Determine whether any of them might be growing in your own backyard or neighborhood.

FINE-TUNE YOUR GARDEN. Replace any invasive plants in your landscape with native alternatives. Unlike many nonnative plants, native plants are hardy, less susceptible to pests and diseases, and are unlikely to escape and become invasive.

JOIN AN ERADICATION EFFORT. Many parks and nature reserves recruit local volunteers to help them remove invasive plants and other pests. These outings can be a great way to get exercise, enjoy time outdoors and meet new friends – all while protecting your natural heritage.

For additional ideas for how to observe National Invasive Species Awareness Week, visit www.nisaw.org.

About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit scientific society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Society promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed

and natural ecosystems, and promotes cooperation among weed science organizations across the nation and around the world. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.