



For Immediate Release

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“National Invasive Species Awareness Week” Spotlights the Importance of Prevention and Management Strategies

LAWRENCE, Kansas – February 10, 2014 – National Invasive Species Awareness Week is scheduled for February 23-28. And according to experts with the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), it’s a topic that deserves our attention. Non-native plants, animals and pathogens can harm humans and the environment and impact our nation’s economy. The damage done by invasive plants alone costs the U.S. an estimated \$34.7 billion a year.

Invasive weeds can produce skin irritation, trigger allergies and poison pets and livestock. They can clog waterways, kill native trees, and shade out crops, ornamentals and prized native flora. They are found in every imaginable habitat, including oceans, lakes, streams, wetlands, croplands, rangelands, natural areas, parks, forests, urban environments, yards and gardens.

“Though the impact of invasive species is profound, there are important steps we can take to manage infestations and prevent their spread,” says Lee Van Wychen, Ph.D., director of science policy for the WSSA. “It all begins with awareness.”

Eight ways you can help

1. Learn about invasive species, especially those found in your region. Your county extension office (www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html) and the National Invasive Species Information Center (www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/index.shtml) are both trusted resources.

2. Clean hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles and other gear to stop invasive species from hitching a ride to a new location.
3. Avoid dumping aquariums or live bait into waterways.
4. Use forage, hay, mulch and soil that are certified as “weed free.”
5. Plant only non-invasive plants in your garden, and remove any known invaders.
6. Report new or expanded invasive species outbreaks to authorities. (See www.invasive.org/report.cfm for a state-by-state list of contacts.)
7. Volunteer to help remove invasive species from public lands and natural areas.
8. Ask your political representatives at the state, local and national level to support invasive species control efforts.

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 Weed Science Society of America 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.