

Join the Battle Against Invasive Species

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May 2016 was proclaimed "Invasive Species Action Month" by the B.C. government, and in celebration, we encourage ministry staff to learn more about invasive species.

Non-native invasive plants and animals displace other species and destroy fish and wildlife habitat, harm rangeland and cause damage to our ecosystem and people's livelihoods. Intervention is needed because they have no natural predators to stop their spread.

Although the focus has typically been on invasive plants within the ministry, invasive species are gaining more and more attention. For instance, European Fire Ants, notorious for swarming and delivering a painful sting, have been in the news the last few years, and the ministry has been working with non-profits and experts on ways to mitigate and stop this invasive species on our roadside.

That said, invasive plants are always top of mind as transportation corridors and soil movement are vectors for spreading invasive plants. Following best management practices goes a long way to helping the ministry control invasive plants.

Every year the ministry delivers an invasive plant management program that funds inventory, planning, education and outreach, and on-the-ground treatment of invasive plants. In the South Coast Region, a major focus continues to be the survey and treatment of invasive knotweeds and towering, toxic giant hogweed. We are also ramping up management of invasive plants in ministry gravel pits.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure works collaboratively with other ministries, regional governments, municipalities, First Nations and non-profits to tackle the spread of invasive species. We're also working with Adopt a Highway volunteers to encourage the

spotting, reporting and removal of invasive species, and just produced [a new invasive plants training video](#) for them.

You can get involved by attending invasive plant tours offered in your region, looking out for invasive plants and species and reporting them to your [regional environmental coordinators](#), volunteering with invasive species non-profits and educating yourself on the issues of invasive species. For more information on invasive species management, visit our ministry's [new Invasive Species Roadside website](#).

We also encourage everyone to download the Report-a-Weed BC or Report-Invasives BC application on their smart phone. These free apps allow the user to scroll through the names and pictures of the top invaders and report their presence right in the field. The report is linked to a GPS location at the time of the report. This report is then verified in the field by knowledgeable staff and contractors. To download the app go to this website: www.reportinvasives.ca

For more details about how the B.C. government is working with the [Invasive Species Council of British Columbia](#) to educate the public and eradicate invasives, click [here](#).

Photos courtesy of the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia.



Roadside boat check stops are in place at borders, to help keep invasive mussels out of B. C.



Sap from giant hogweed, when on skin exposed to sunlight, can lead to severe burning and blistering.



Japanese knotweed is highly invasive and degrades road beds, trails and building foundations.



Zebra/Quagga Mussels
These tiny freshwater mussels clog drains, damage infrastructure, and are very costly to control/eradicate