

WHY INVASIVE PLANT AWARENESS MONTH?

Invasive Plant Awareness Month will be held in September throughout the state of Kentucky to bring awareness around the issue of invasive exotic plants. It will be kicked off by a presentation of a proclamation signed by the governor at the Capital Rotunda. A variety of removal projects and educational activities will be held in the following weeks. The following stresses the importance of the issue of invasive exotic plants.

- **Biological Threat.** The threat of invasive plants to our nation's biological diversity is second only to habitat destruction. They are threatening our unique and treasured natural heritage.
- **Economic Threat.** Every year \$26 billion worth of economic damage is caused by unwanted invasive plants across our country.

Invasive Plant Awareness Month can address this issue by:

- **Promoting Education-** More understanding will lead to fewer introductions of new problem weeds, which leads to more cost savings.
 - § **Working with landowners.** Landowners with productive forestland, tree farms, wildlife habitat, lake or river frontage are just as concerned as farmers about the condition of the lands they manage.
 - § **Improving the level of public awareness.** The public will assist in preventing the spread and establishment of new weeds by requesting that its nursery growers supply alternative species. The public's interest will create a market for non-invasive species.
 - § **Coordinating and enhancing opportunities for research and marketing.** We need to learn better ways to combat the problem species. We need to find alternatives that can be marketed for various applications that now use invasive species (i.e. bank stabilization projects using crown vetch).
 - § **Coordinating training opportunities for those charged with recognizing, eradicating and monitoring weed species.** Targeting additional weeds will require training on identification and effective control methods as well as the need to monitor their distribution within the state.
- **Promoting Cooperation-** We need to be on the same page about the invasive plant issue.
 - § **Agreeing on the definition of invasive weed.** We need to agree on the definition of "invasive plants" so we can address natural area weeds as well as agricultural ones.
 - § **Collaborating with other public and private agencies.** While some state and private agencies are spending funds to control invasive plants, other

agencies are spending money promoting their use in road stabilization projects, logging road restorations and mining site reclamation projects.

§ **Creating a comprehensive list of invasive plants.** We need to remove the confusion surrounding multiple and incomplete lists that are found in existing statutes and regulations by developing one list of invasive plants.

Kentucky must act now to prevent additional ecological and economical damage. Our common denominator is that invasive species are increasing, they are costly to combat, their sustained control will require diligence and they won't be going away on their own.