
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development
Invasive Species Council of British Columbia

Spread the word: Invasive Species Action Month

VICTORIA – Giant hogweed. Death cap mushrooms. Zebra mussels. These are just some of the species that are not supposed to be in British Columbia.

The B.C. government has proclaimed May 2019 as Invasive Species Action Month to raise public awareness of invasive species. Invasive species are plants or animals that are not native to the province or are found outside of their natural distribution areas. These organisms can disrupt habitat, displace native species and negatively impact the environment and economy.

“We’re partnering together to tackle the problem of invasive species and the impact they have on B.C.’s ecosystems,” said Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. “These kinds of organisms can reduce biodiversity, increase soil erosion, alter soil chemistry and adversely affect commercial crops. Some may even pose a health risk to animals and people.”

The Province is working with the Invasive Species Council of B.C. and regional invasive species organizations to effectively manage invasive species. It is also partnering with local governments and partners, such as The Nature Trust and Ducks Unlimited, to limit the spread of harmful species.

The Invasive Species Council of B.C. has planned weekly activities to mark Invasive Species Action Month 2019:

- Week 1 (May 1-5) – **PlantWise & Grow Me Instead** focuses on impacts caused by invasive plants and will help gardeners and the gardening industry (including those involved in agriculture, ranching and horticulture) prevent the spread of invasive plants in B.C.
- Week 2 (May 6-12) – **Recreational Boating** focuses on the Clean, Drain, Dry program and protecting B.C.’s freshwater and marine environments from aquatic invasive species.
- Week 3 (May 13-19) – **PlayCleanGo** focuses on outdoor recreation and preventing the spread of invasive species through responsible behaviour.
- Week 4 (May 20-26) – **Buy It Where You Burn It** focuses on campers, hunters and other firewood users to spread awareness of not transporting firewood (which may contain harmful insects) to other areas.
- Week 5 (May 27-31) - **Don't Let it Loose** focuses on pet owners and the aquarium trade, and risks associated with releasing unwanted pets into the wild.

More information is available on the council’s website at: www.bcinvasivesmonth.com

“We thank the Province for working with the Invasive Species Council of B.C. to promote

awareness and prevent the spread of invasive species in British Columbia, through Invasive Species Action Month,” said Gail Wallin, executive director, Invasive Species Council of B.C. “We are excited to see the growing interest and participation in Invasive Species Action Month by diverse communities and companies, and we look forward to building new partnerships to take action on invasive species.”

The Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia 2018-2022 was released in 2018. It includes contributions and feedback from over 100 organizations, agencies, businesses and individuals throughout the province. The Invasive Species Council of B.C., Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the inter-ministry Invasive Species Working Group were involved in its development.

The strategy includes recommendations for the management of problem species, habitat restoration, monitoring programs, regulation and policy, funding and research. It focuses on seven key priorities, or “pillars”:

- establish and enforce effective regulatory tools;
- strengthen collaboration;
- prevent introduction and spread;
- implement effective control, restoration and monitoring programs;
- support and extend relevant and applicable research;
- provide stable, long-term funding; and
- promote action through communication and education.

Quick Facts:

- The B.C. government, the Invasive Species Council of B.C., local governments, First Nations and national and community-based organizations work co-operatively year-round to prevent the spread of these harmful organisms, deliver effective management practices and encourage public reporting of invasive species.
- The B.C. government manages high-priority invasive species (through the work of staff or contractors) and provides ongoing financial assistance to support the work of invasive species organizations to contain and control invasive plants.
- The B.C. government’s Invasive Plant Program identifies sites where new invasive plant species are found and responds quickly to contain and eradicate them before they become established and start spreading.
- Members of the public can report sightings of invasive plant species anywhere in B.C. by calling 1 888 WEEDSBC (1 888 933-3722) or by using the Report-A-Weed or Report Invasives BC smartphone apps available at: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/invasive-species>

Learn More:

Invasive species in B.C.: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/invasive-species>

Invasive Species Council of British Columbia: <http://www.bcinvasives.ca>

Invasive Species Strategy for British Columbia 2018-2022 is available on the Invasive Species Council of British Columbia website:

https://bcinvasives.ca/documents/Invasive_Species_Strategy_for_BC-2018-180117-WEB.pdf

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