



Meeting conducted via Zoom - May 29, 2023: 7:00-8:30 p.m.

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Thank you for your time and support!

Greetings and Introductions

Cathy Kavassalis welcomed the 17 team members who were able to attend the Zoom meeting.

- Plant images used on the evening’s PowerPoint slides were of invasive ornamental plants that have escaped into natural areas across the country.
- With permission, we are collecting and saving images posted to our CCIPR FB page of plants like periwinkle, lily-of-the-valley, scilla, English ivy, goutweed, and yellow arch angel, sold in nurseries. This visual library of reports helps us document the need for regulation.

Progress Report

Claudette Sims reports that over 70 organizations and businesses are now pledging their support for CCIPR’s objectives.

On May 11th, CCIPR officially released our white paper: REDUCING THE SALES OF INVASIVE PLANTS IN CANADA: TO SAFEGUARD BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH. Cathy and Claudette give our immense thanks to Katherine Baird, Candi Jeronimo, Lynne Patenaude, Renee Sandelowsky, and Freyja Whitten for their countless hours reviewing and revising the text. It not only explains the problem with the current regulatory system, but also offers **real solutions for change**. It is posted to our CCIPR website under [Publications](#).

Government Outreach

Lynne Patenaude explained that our key audience is departments at both the Federal and provincial/territorial levels. We have sent letters to various minister's offices, deputy ministers, and managers. We are hoping to set up follow-up meetings in near future.

Key federal departments contacted include:

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the current primary regulatory body for invasive plants. CFIA was given a pre-release draft for comment as well as the current document but did not offer feedback on either.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada (lead on biodiversity and terrestrial species)
- Fisheries and Oceans (aquatic species)
- Natural Resources (lead on forestry)
- Health Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

It was also sent to BiodivCanada, a coordinating body for biodiversity. There is a Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Committee on Invasive Species. (The Invasive Alien Species Task Force has published [recommendations](#) in 2017 to improve IAS prevention and management, available through [biodivcanada](#)). It has been difficult to determine if the committee is currently active. Upon Lynne's request, our paper was distributed by the ECCC Secretariat to FPT members, but list not shared with CCIPR.

Other Outreach

All of CCIPR's partners, supporters, and team members were advised of our white paper release.

Communications have been sent to various National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including partners like the David Suzuki Foundation as well as the Canadian Environmental Law Association, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Canada Parks and Wilderness, Friends of the Earth, and Nature Conservancy of Canada. Other influencers like researchers, academics, and regional NGOs also received the document.

Cathy has contacted all 19 District Boards to try and get the more than 270 member societies within the Ontario Horticultural Association engaged as supporters. District 6 – the Carolinian Society has now enlisted 15 of its 21 societies thanks to the efforts of Lianne Krane, the District Director and CCIPR supporter.

Claudette has been working on Master Gardener (MG) groups within and outside the province of Ontario. We are pleased to now have the Vancouver Master Gardeners group as partners. We will try to set up a coast-to-coast conference with MG supporters and partners soon.



Many other departments, organizations, and influencers need to be contacted and this will require a concerted **Team effort**. See **Influencer Outreach Support** below.

CCIPR Public Relations Campaign Strategy

Candi Jeronimo explained that the release of the white paper presented an opportunity to garner media attention.

Goals:

- Secure one mainstream top-tier piece of coverage, and four additional pieces of coverage throughout the month of May and June.
- Increase FB following by 10% (100 members) during the first week of launch; increase Instagram following by 50% (75 followers) during the first week of launch!
- Add 20 new partners during the first week of launch, 100 total by the end of June.

Outcomes:

- 2 pieces of mainstream cover, 1 pending (Weather Network)
- Working on CBC and OpEd for *The Globe and Mail*
- FB: 100 new members first week of paper release – now more than 340 members since release (22% increase ~1500 members)
- Instagram: 56 new followers first week of paper release – now more than 101 followers since release (67% increase 250 followers), launched end of April
- More than 50 currently, increasing outreach to meet/exceed goal by end of June.

Your help is requested for Influencer Outreach

We need your help to reach some influential people/supporters.

ASK:

- Take on 3-5 contacts over the next 2 weeks (contacts will be assigned to you)
- Model outreach documents provided on our [Member Materials Page](#) + just add personalization (why we're reaching out to them specifically)

Send an email to candi.ccipr@gmail.com to be assigned!

Canada's 2030 Biodiversity Strategy Survey.

Environment Canada and Climate Change released a short [Discussion Paper](#) in mid-May, "Toward a 2030 Biodiversity Strategy for Canada: Halting and reversing nature loss." It is not specific and provides no indication of the government's current plans.

Your help is requested to ensure that invasive plant regulation is included in the *2030 Biodiversity Strategy for Canada*.

- They have set up a [survey](#) form for people to use to provide input by **July 14**.
- CCIPR will provide a template for responses in case people are looking for support to submit input on invasive plants. Visit our [Member Materials Page](#) to view our suggestions.

Developing Invasive Plant Lists

We continue to get requests for lists of plants that should be regulated. We will continue to take care not to stipulate plants, but rather point to existing lists of invasive plants identified by plant councils or other authorities, such as Credit Valley Conservation Authority. The 2022 Ontario Auditor General [report](#) on invasive plant management identified 30 terrestrial plant species that should be considered for regulation including creeping jenny, goutweed, Norway maple, periwinkle, spearmint and winter- creeper commonly found in garden centres. We still need to collect and consolidate lists. This is an overwhelming task, but Candi has suggested a potential global solution.

A request has been submitted to UBC to build a tech solution. Bots can scour the internet for invasive plant reference lists and create an open-source database that can be queried from any location. Ideally, an app would be developed so consumers could search this database for a plant at point of purchase and pull up information. We will let you know how that initiative progresses.

Letters to Nurseries and Industry Leaders

When asked about its sale of invasive but otherwise legal plants, including creeping jenny, Victoria Mulvale, Director of Marketing at Sheridan Nurseries, contends that 'the plant in question is readily available across Ontario,' and adds that the company 'is committed to not selling any plant that is classified as restricted or prohibited by the Ontario Invasive Plant Council.' [BlogTO article](#),

Upon the advice of the lawyers on our team, we will not post the letter publicly and will review liability issues associated with industry communications. It is on our [Member Materials Page](#).

We have sent a letter regarding Gardens Canada [Plant Purple](#) campaign promoting barberry.

We have advised them that the CFIA has issued a Notice to Industry not to distribute purple barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* 'Concorde') in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan and that they consider it to be invasive Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Québec.

Questions and Discussion

- Colleen Cirillo explained that the Horticultural Outreach Committee had organized effective tours of areas invaded by invasive plants in 2013 and suggested CCIPR do the same as part of our outreach campaign. Colleen also noted that the applications for Ontario's Invasive Species Centre's Invasive Species Action Fund are due on June 7, which may be an opportunity to seek funding for some CCIPR activities. She will consider it with others.
- She may coordinate a team to set up some media events to tour invaded areas.
- Julianne Labreche and Lynne Patenaude will coordinate with team members in the Ottawa area interested in organizing face to face meetings with officials, as well, tours of invaded areas around the capital were recommended.
- Kate Harries will reach out to naturalist groups.
- A question was posed whether there is a benefit in sending letters to large stores, or is that creating a constituency that will fight you? We will reflect on our approach to industry. We should focus efforts on policy change rather than industry change.
- Bev Wagar advised we use Mailchimp to handle increased communication requirements. We will explore migration to that system and at the same time review our privacy and security protocols.
- Members reported difficulty finding information on the website. We will update the site and work on improvements over the summer.
- Addition of a map showing locations of nurseries who have signed on as Partners (and agreed to the Voluntary Code?) was discussed.

Thank you for your time and support!