



Meeting conducted via Zoom – July 18, 2023, 1-2:30 p.m. EST.

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Welcome and introductions:

Invitations for this meeting were sent to various Master Gardener (MG) groups in Alberta, Atlantic Canada, British Columbia (including Prince George, Okanagan, Thompson Shuswap, Vancouver, Vancouver Island, and Victoria), Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan. We received regrets from Vanessa Young - Saskatchewan MG and Robin Wilmot -President Victoria Master Gardener Association as well as Anna Peasgood from Prince George MGs.

CCIPR co-founders, Cathy and Claudette, welcomed those able to attend and invited participants to introduce themselves.

Atlantic Canada

- Karen Rogers – Atlantic Master Gardeners Association (AMGA) from New Brunswick; new MG; retired educator; active with the Butterflyway Ranger Program

British Columbia

- Ann Allgaier – Prince George MGs; retired medical librarian.
- Ruth Beilman – Vancouver Island MGs-Vice-President; lives on Vancouver Island and cares for abundant natural acreage

Manitoba

- Linda Dietrick – Education Director Manitoba MG Association (MMGA); retired prof of German; interest in gardening; active in invasive plant prevention
- Marilena Kowalchuk – MMGA; currently an educator; worked in outreach and conservation
- Lisa Renner – Editor of MMGA newsletter; MG for 11 years, started in Toronto and moved to Winnipeg; retired physician; interest in native plants and invasive plant prevention
- Liz Sellors – MMGA; active member since 2011; interest in invasive plant prevention

Ontario

- Cathy Kavassalis – MGs of Ontario (MGOI); background in science and education; co-founder of CCIPR
- Claudette Sims – Past President MGOI; retired educator; co-founder of CCIPR

- Karen Sciuk – President MGOI; ex manager of garden centre and former medical researcher

Presentation:

Cathy and Claudette shared information about CCIPR, the sale of invasive plants, and the regulatory processes across Canada. The **recorded presentation will be made available on our** CCIPR [Member Materials](#) page.

Discussion:

Linda Detriech (MMGA): **With regard to the recent presentation by the CCIPR team to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), how was the talk received?**

The Deputy Minister (Annette Gibbons) and Administrative Assistant for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Daniel Marcil) were complementary and expressed surprise by some of what we shared. They requested our presentation and were interested in following up on our recommendations.

(DFO has done a lot of risk assessments on aquatic plants and have worked to alert provinces. However, given disparities in the regulatory processes and resources across the country, high risk invasive aquatic plants continue to be sold.)

CCIPR also gave a well-received talk to the British Columbia's Invasive Species Working Group (IMISWG). Following the presentation, Val Miller, the Provincial Invasive Plant Officer Chair, Inter-Ministry Invasive Species Working Group, asked that we present to the National Invasive Alien Species Committee.

(In B.C. there are two pieces of legislation for [invasive species](#) and [noxious weeds](#) with some overlap. These should be amalgamated and updated to include more ornamental plants and address problems, like using only common names when naming regulated invasive plants. The IMISWG is aware of the problems but has not been able to bring about the needed legislative change.)

Karen Scuiik (MGOI) wondered if CCIPR would be more effective **starting at provincial level versus the federal level. Bottom up or top down?**

CCIPR is trying both ways. We are limited by the number of volunteers doing the outreach and would appreciate it if regional MG groups could connect with municipal, regional, and provincial influencers. We have prepared some [materials for outreach](#) that can be used. The CCIPR core team is focusing on national discussions.

Karen agreed that MGs could share resources locally. MGs could talk about **priority lists** with associated horticultural groups, garden clubs and area nurseries. To support this, Cathy has posted a list of invasive plants regulated across Canada and the U.S. border states in a [spreadsheet form](#) available to download from the CCIPR.ca website. Provincial invasive plant councils have also developed lists and helpful *Plant Wise* and *Grow Me Instead* guides are available in several provinces (e.g., [B.C.](#), [MB](#); [NS & NB](#); [ON](#)). Lists are also available from conservation authorities, and other databases like the [Invasive Plant Atlas](#). Some plant lists are posted to the [CCIPR Canadian Invasive Plant Lists](#), but this page needs work (suggestions and volunteers would be welcome). A Canadian national database is sadly lacking.

If plants are banned, Karen asked **what will nurseries do with existing stock?**
How do we get nurseries to scale down production of invasive plants?

Plants like barberry take several years in the field before they can be sold. In many U.S. jurisdictions, like Maine, officials work with the trades to phase out certain types of invasive stock like trees and shrubs. For instance, the highly invasive Callery pear is hugely popular in some regions ([The Rise and Fall of the Ornamental Callery Pear Tree](#) is quite fascinating). In 2018, Ohio passed a bill banning the sale or distribution of Callery pears by 2023. This was done to give growers a chance to develop alternatives. Similar bans will take effect in South Carolina and Pennsylvania in 2024.

Alternatively, some states require labels at point of sale (e.g., [New York](#) requires labels on Norway Maple, Virgin's Bower, Burning Bush etc.; [Minnesota](#) requires labels on Amur corktree, Amur maple, etc. This alerts the public to issues and will hopefully reduce demand over time. You can learn more about [U.S. Border State Regulations](#) on our website).

While there will be some cost to the industry in transitioning away from invasive plants, the costs of doing nothing are excessive, so action is needed. You can learn more about impacts to industry in our white paper (See for instance: [THE ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE SECTOR – COSTS AND OPPORTUNITIES](#)).

We have to monetize the impacts to the environment, public health, recreation, tourism, fisheries, etc., to justify the need for legislative change. It comes down to economics. It is our job to show that the costs of the status quo are not acceptable long term.

We also have to point out our international obligations. Under the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, Canada must reduce invasive species by 50% by 2030 ([COP 15](#)). We met with Friends of the Earth (FOE). Beatrice Olivastri, CEO, suggested it may be possible to launch a lawsuit, because the government is failing to meet obligations and the CFIA in particular is failing to adequately safeguard plant health in the broader sense of protecting native plant diversity. We will keep you apprised of any action from FOE.

Landscape Ontario has requested a presentation on invasive plants and would like to duplicate the format used by the MMGA [Invasive Ornamentals Educational Event](#). Cathy will connect Karen with Kathy McLean (Professional Development, Seminar Coordinator Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association) to develop a possible event for 2024). The Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS) in partnership with the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) and industry will be hosting a [National Horticulture and Invasive Species Conference](#) on November 8th, 2023, and November 9th, 2023, 11am – 5pm EST.

Karen reflected on events like the [Landscape Ontario Congress](#) and suggested this could be an important educational opportunity to discuss the impacts of invasive plants. In addition, having just been to a course at Vineland Research Station in Niagara, Ontario, where invasive plants are showcased in area gardens, she saw **a real need to educate landscapers and horticultural people who are instructing future generations.**

Linda Dietrick spoke about MMGA initiatives. MMGA has taken five actions to address invasive plants.

1. Hosted a conference April 1, 2023 - ***Invasive Ornamental Plants: What Home Gardeners and Professionals Need to Know.***
Landscape professionals and members of the nursery trade were invited. Speakers included Cathy, Andrea Eastman from Alberta, and Manitoba Weed Control Supervisor, Kristin Pingatore who addressed prevention, education and mitigation of invasive plants.
67 attended the event in person and 37 were from outside of Master Gardeners including the President of the Manitoba Nursery and Landscape Association.
2. The presentations were recorded and made available to the public on the [MMGA](#) website and resource page - [Invasive Plants of Manitoba](#). Those presentations have received 240 views.
3. As MMGA Education Director and event organiser, Linda compiled two plant lists. [What Not to Plant in Manitoba](#) was provided at the event and comprises about 60 plants of ornamental origin or use that have been designated a weed or an invasive plant in Manitoba or neighbouring jurisdictions with similar growing conditions (AB, northern ON, SK; ND, MN and WI). Southern MB is currently zone 3 or 4. After the event, **A Short List of Invasive Ornamentals of Concern** was developed that comprises ten plants that are not yet provincially regulated in Manitoba but represent a significant threat. The short list was requested by the President of the Manitoba Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) who felt he could not overwhelm members with the long list.
4. The short list and letter was sent to the MNLA and an article on invasive plants was published in the MNLA newsletter [Summer 2023](#). The article highlights common barberry and Bishop's goutweed and points to the Master Gardener resources and the [National Voluntary Code of Conduct](#).

5. Finally, MGs are posting to gardening groups on Facebook, pointing people to the information on the MMGA website and taking time to reply to specific posts about invasive plants. Conversations about some plants like creeping bellflower and Valerian can “blow up.” MGs must politely explain the impacts of invasive plants and suggest alternatives.

As a result of MMGA efforts, there has been a noted improvement in invasive plant awareness. This awareness shows in presentations, projects, and plant sales. They know now in the Winnipeg area not to offer plants like goutweed to the public.

Is there an invasive plant / species council in Manitoba?

There is, but **it is dormant**. It has been inactive since 2018 due to lack of resources, time, and people to keep it going. However, the Manitoba Weed Supervisors, who do the control and removal work, want to see more prevention. When notified by MGs that common baby’s breath (*Gypsophila paniculata*) was being sold wholesale and retail in Manitoba, Kristin Pingatore was contacted. She passed the information on to superiors who did go out to talk to the nurseries. While Kristin thought they would have to destroy the crop, it still appears for sale in a couple of nurseries. Unfortunately, the provincial legislation **does not prohibit the sale of the plant**. Common baby’s breath is a Tier 3 noxious weed, which means “a person must . . . control a tier 3 noxious weed that is on land that the person owns or occupies if the weed's uncontrolled growth or spread is likely to negatively affect an aspect of Manitoba's economy or environment in the area of the land or the well-being of residents in proximity to the land” ([The Noxious Weeds Act](#), CCSM c N110). Kristin said that when they were updating the noxious weeds legislation in 2017, their lawyer said the legislation was ambiguous and should clearly state *you cannot sell a noxious weed* in Manitoba. However, that language was not included, and the law does not clearly prohibit sales. [This is one of the problems with provincial laws.]

The Association of Manitoba Weed Supervisors would like to see the provincial government revisit and update the act and regulations. Kristen agrees that plants like Dame’s rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) should be added to the list of noxious weeds as it is in Saskatchewan. In addition, the law should prohibit the sale of all noxious weeds regardless of tier. We can make the argument that on the one hand taxpayers are paying to have these plants removed, while on the other hand, they are allowed to be sold to the public. Taxpayers should not be happy about that.

Linda will ask the MMGA board to **write a letter and speak to policy makers**. This action may be most effective after fall elections as no policy change can be expected before the new government has been determined. In the meantime, Linda will continue developing arguments and collecting evidence of escaped ornamental plants in Manitoba impacting the natural environment. These can be put together in a package to present to the incoming officials.

Would MMGA be interested in a **national Master Gardener Conference** to share information and ideas? (virtual)

MMGA would be happy to participate in a MG National conference, but there would be limited interest if it were on invasive plants alone, as they have just held their own conference on that topic.

Karen Rogers asked about the recent UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Montreal and Canada's commitments around invasive species.

Target 6 was among the global targets for 2030 that Canada pledged to meet. "Prevent the introduction of priority invasive alien species, and reduce by at least half the introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species, and eradicate or control invasive alien species on islands and other priority sites" ([COP15: Nations Adopt Four Goals, 23 Targets for 2030](#)).

The primary pathway for introduction of invasive plants is through the horticultural trades. Therefore, it is very important for policy makers to be reminded of our commitment.

Linda noted that Manitoba has signed on to the [Montreal Protocol](#). Cathy misspoke when she stated that the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was the same as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is developing a [2030 Biodiversity Strategy for Canada](#). In response to an ECCC survey, CCIPR and members submitted recommendations for the preparation of this strategy (you can see some of our suggested responses on our CCIPR [Members Materials](#) page). Lynne Pattenaude, on our CCIPR team, has worked with ECCC and is trying to make inroads there.

Ann Allgaier asked about the white paper.

After months of research, we self-published the paper, [**REDUCING THE SALES OF INVASIVE PLANTS IN CANADA: TO SAFEGUARD BIODIVERSITY AND HUMAN HEALTH**](#) on May 10, 2023. It will undergo revisions after we have met with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), at their request, to correct inaccuracies. We hope to post revisions by fall. There is an executive summary in French and English.

Exciting - Invasive Plant Recognition App:

A CCIPR member, Candi Jeronimo, proposed the development of an Invasive Plant Recognition App for consumers to "**Check before you buy.**" She presented the challenge to the [University of British Columbia Cloud Innovation Centre](#) (CIC). Over the next four months, they have agreed to develop a prototype app where a person can snap a picture (plant or label), at the point of sale, and get information on the plant (based on the GPS location). The

application would query all the known invasive species lists from invasive plant councils, government websites (federal, provincial, and municipal), conservation authorities, etc. The application could be integrated with open-source databases. We will let you know when the Proof of Concept has been developed.

Linda Detriech wondered about the effectiveness of voluntary measures within the horticultural trades and the costs associated with labelling. It is not clear that labels on cigarette packages were effective in the short term. Legislation that makes it clear what should **not be sold** would be better. Everyone thinks they will be the exception and can control plants in their garden. Arguments for the protection of nature will not be enough. Economic arguments are key as we look for ways to put pressure on the government to enact legislative change. **Why has Maine been more successful?**

Cathy suggested it may be two-fold. They hit a crisis point sooner than we have. Invasive plants were visibly impacting people. They had the leadership that recognized the impact and believed protection of the environment was important.

Linda noted that some groups of people have a low tolerance for impingements on their freedoms. They don't want to be told what they can plant. In the colder prairie provinces, they will state "it's too cold here" for the plant to become invasive. They don't necessarily recognize the potential impact of Climate Change. Many do not want to be told by Ottawa what they can do. Therefore, it is really important that CCIPR develop economic arguments and focus on **conservation** of the environment for **resource use** rather than present general ecology arguments. This is why Ducks Unlimited has been successful. There are political divides in Canada and CCIPR must be aware not to make politically partisan cases.

Claudette noted the \$15 billion dollars Canada has spent on invasive plant management since 1970. She also said that emphasis on the human health aspects of invasive plants can sway attitudes. Informing the public about the link between Lyme disease and Japanese barberry or multiflora roses is effective. Reminding the public that giant hogweed is a garden escapee that causes severe skin burns and is costly to remove is also effective. Showing the expensive damage that a garden escapee like Japanese knotweed has done can also be effective. We have seen huge changes on the MGOI Facebook page since we initiated this information campaign stop the next giant hogweed, to stop the next Japanese knotweed from being introduced or spread to the province. Members are now regularly asking if a plant is invasive, and we are also seeing some impacts in nursery-trades.

Lisa Renner commented that photos of invasive plants seem most impactful when there are big swaths. To make the case in Manitoba, evidence from Manitoba is needed. But she had observed a lone scilla in a local forest and thought invasions begin with single escaped garden plants. It would be useful to track such small incursions over time. **Is there a citizen science project for posting images of escaped garden plants?**

Cathy suggested [iNaturalist](#). They have launched an [Invasive Species Project](#). [iMapInvasives](#) also focuses on the threat of invasive species in several states and in [Saskatchewan](#). It likely could be expanded to other provinces if there was a provincial lead organisation.

Claudette shared our CCIPR [Facebook photos](#) of invasive plants. These are very helpful for education. Even single escapees are important, because stories can be told.

Journalist, Julianne Labreche, has been collecting stories for CCIPR from around the country. Some have been posted to our [CCIPR Stories](#) page. Currently, most are from Ontario as that is where CCIPR began. We would like to grow these to reflect experiences in every province and territory. Please consider contributing to this page and our Blog.

Linda D. asked if it **would be helpful if MMGA members joined the CCIPR FB group**.

Yes! We would appreciate MGs to participate from across the country and would find your input most valuable.

Linda further noted that a **“check before you buy”** app would be very important. Currently, in Manitoba the MMGA pdf is the only list in circulation for landscaping plants.

Karen Scuiik suggested a letter writing campaign. CCIPR has developed sample [letters of introduction](#) for this purpose and will be revising them this summer. CCIPR would appreciate MG thoughts and suggestions. Karen will put a sample letter in the MGOI newsletter that members can send to municipal, provincial, and federal representatives. Every province could do this from the town and city level to the national level.

Karen Rogers noted that national initiatives like Butterflyway have been successful because they empower people to make a difference. Can CCIPR build on that success and join forces with groups like Butterflyway? For example, would CCIPR present to Butterflyway?

CCIPR is trying to connect with groups across the country who share common goals. From organizations interested in saving taxpayer dollars, to those wanting to save butterflies, we would be happy to make presentations. Please identify key influencers within provinces and territories who should be contacted and help us make connections. We would be happy to train more volunteers to give presentations and will share all necessary materials.

The CCIPR team would like to thank all MGs for attending and all those interested in contributing to this initiative. We look forward to our future work together.