

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Invasive alien species **harm biodiversity, human health, and economies**. Canada must reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by at least 50 percent by 2030, in order to protect biological diversity.<sup>1</sup> Biodiversity is crucial because it encompasses the entire variety of life on our planet, playing a fundamental role in supporting ecological systems that also provide essential services, including food, medicine, and economic benefits. In addition, it contributes significantly to cultural and recreational values. Preserving biodiversity is imperative for sustaining a healthy planet and ensuring the survival of all living organisms.<sup>2</sup>

The number of invasive plant species in Canada is growing and will increase with climate change. The federal government needs to act NOW to reduce ever-increasing environmental damage and escalating management and mitigation costs.

The ornamental/horticultural industry is **the primary pathway** for the introduction of non-native invasive plants entering Canada. However, Canada's policies, regulatory tools, and resource allocations are inadequate to control the flow of ornamental invasive plants sold through the nursery, pet/aquarium trade or ecommerce.

To protect our environment, economy and public health from invasive plant species, the Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation (CCIPR) believes Canada should improve policies, tools, and regulations by taking the following measures:

- Create a science-based national plant risk assessment database.
- Require that all imports of plants new to Canada undergo risk assessments.
- Ban the sale and movement of high-risk invasive plant species.
- Require point of sale labelling to educate the public about invasive plants and provide instructions to prevent their spread.
- Provide continued and stable funding for public education.
- Encourage the adoption of the National Voluntary Code of Conduct for the Ornamental Horticultural Industry as a short-term corrective measure.

Currently, federal invasive plant regulatory actions focus on safeguarding Canada's food supply and plant resources. The scope of laws used to regulate plants does not fully protect the health of the environment, humans, and other living beings. New regulatory tools are needed to minimize the adverse effects of invasive species on biodiversity and related ecosystem services, as well as human health and safety. The *European Union's regulation 1143/2014, New*

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<sup>1</sup> This is Target 6 in the Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework (Convention on Biological Diversity – 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties [CBD COP-15.], [2022](#)).

<sup>2</sup> Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES), "Summary for Policymakers of the Thematic Assessment Report on Invasive Alien Species and their Control of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services," [2023](#); World Health Organization (WHO), "Biodiversity and Health," [2015](#).

Reducing the sales of invasive plants cont.

*Zealand's Biosecurity Act (1993)*, and *Australia's Biosecurity Act (2015)* can serve as models for change.

Canada must build its capacity to perform risk assessments and improve its ability to translate environmental concerns into economic terms to better meet obligations under the *Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*. Failure to value nature in monetary terms underpins the global diversity crisis.<sup>3</sup> CCIPR is looking for the Federal Government to deliver on its commitments to the Convention and believe that action is urgently needed.

Lack of knowledge and resources hampers regional efforts to address the growing threats. Enhanced federal support to build knowledge is necessary for the public good, transparency, fairness, and for equity. Information about invasive plants should be shared in a central information depot. This information should be on-line and publicly available wherever possible.

CCIPR believes that improving legislation and oversight, building a knowledge base, and providing education and awareness programs can all form the basis of a successful strategy to safeguard our natural world from invasive ornamental plants. This is essential for human health and well-being, economic prosperity, as well as food safety and security.



Yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*). Source: Donald Cameron & the Native Plant Trust.

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<sup>3</sup> According to the IPBES Secretariat: "The way nature is valued in political and economic decisions is both a key driver of the global biodiversity crisis and a vital opportunity to address it" (IPBES, "Media Release: IPBES Values Assessment - Decisions Based on Narrow Set of Market Values of Nature Underpin the Global Biodiversity Crisis," [2022](#)); "Nature underpins all economic activities and human well-being" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], "Biodiversity, Natural Capital and the Economy: A Policy Guide for Finance, Economic and Environment Ministers," [2021](#)).