

to the Invasive Species Edition of the *Natural Inquirer*!

Do you know what an invasive *species* is? If you are thinking of invaders from a distant planet, you are close, except that these species invade from right here on Earth. Invasive species are any plant, animal, or *organism* that is not *native* to the ecosystem it is in, and is likely to cause harm to the environment, the economy, or human health. Although invasive species do not come from another planet, they can come across oceans from distant countries. Invasive species have the potential to cause a lot of damage. They have been estimated to cost the United States \$100 billion each year!

Because invasive species have the potential to cause so much harm, the U.S. President in 1999 signed an Executive Order that created a special council to address invasive species. The council, which includes people from 13 departments of the Federal Government, created a special plan to address the threat of invasive species.

The plan identified four main ways to address invasive species:

1. *Prevention*. Stop invasive species from entering the country in the first place.
2. *Early identification and rapid response*. Look for new areas where an invasive species is spreading and quickly destroy it before it can spread further.
3. *Control*. When the invasive species cannot be destroyed, keep it from spreading further.
4. *Restoration*. Recreate native ecosystems whenever possible.



Glossary:



species: (**spe** **sez**): Groups of organisms that resemble one another in appearance, behavior, chemical processes, and genetic structure.

organism: (**ôr** **gä** **niz** **um**): Any living thing.

native: (**nat** **iv**): Naturally occurring in an area.

restoration: (**rest** or **a** **shun**): The act of bringing back to an earlier condition.

nonnative (**nän** **na** **tiv**): Not naturally occurring in an area.

exotic: (**ig** **zät** **ik**) Strange, different, or foreign.

Pronunciation Guide

<u>a</u>	as in ape	<u>ô</u>	as in for
<u>ä</u>	as in car	<u>u</u>	as in use
<u>e</u>	as in me	<u>ü</u>	as in fur
<u>i</u>	as in ice	<u>oo</u>	as in tool
<u>o</u>	as in go	<u>ng</u>	as in sing

Accented syllables are in **bold**.

Welcome (continued)

Did You Know?

Invasive species are a special type of *nonnative* species. Nonnative species, sometimes called alien species or *exotics*, may not be harmful to an ecosystem. They may even provide benefits to an area. Examples include nonnative bushes and flowers that are planted in gardens around homes and offices. Invasive species are nonnative species that cause harm to the environment, the economy, or human health. It is important to realize that not all nonnative species are invasive and harmful.

The introduction of invasive species can be on purpose or accidental. Some invasive species are introduced for a specific purpose, such as controlling another invasive species. An invasive species that is brought into an ecosystem by accident is sometimes called a “hitchhiker.” For example, a person hiking may accidentally carry an invasive species to another area on a hiking boot, or a dog might carry an invasive species on its fur! Many invasive species are spread to another country in the packing material that carries the goods being shipped.

For more information on invasive species impacts, visit <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/impacts.shtml>.

What you can do—

- ✳ Whenever possible, garden with plants native to your area.
- ✳ Do not transport plants or animals from one country to another.
- ✳ Learn and share with others about invasive species and how they spread.

In this edition of the *Natural Inquirer*, you will learn about several different invasive species. You will learn about how these invasive species spread and the studies that scientists conduct to better understand and stop the spread of invasive species. After reading the *Natural Inquirer's* Invasive Species Edition, you will be able to help spread the word about what invasive species are and how to stop them!

