February 24–March 1, 2008

National Invasive Weed Awareness Week

Weeds Won't Wait: Don't Hesitate

Beach Vitex
Vitex rotundifolia

- Imported for beach stabilization in the southeastern United States, with stems that can grow up to 60 feet, Beach vitex is drought and salt tolerant, with seed production as high as 20,000 seeds per square meter.
- Disperses seeds and other plant parts by animals, wind, or water; it has recently been documented growing in salt marshes.
- Traps wind-blown sand less efficiently than native species.
- Crowds out native species such as sea oats and alters sea turtle nesting, reducing hatchling survival rates.

Cheatgrass
Bromus tectorum L.
a.k.a. Downy brome

- Cheatgrass is an annual that quickly develops an extensive fibrous root system, which removes moisture from the soil that is critical for the growth of native plants.
- Matures early, allowing the plants to produce seed early and then dry up. It increases the frequency and severity of range land fires and has a critical effect on desirable vegetation in rangelands throughout the West.
- Reduces the growth of sagebrush, which results in a decrease in the numbers of native wildlife species that depend on such shrubs for food, shelter, cover, and nesting.

Giant Salvinia
Salvinia molesta

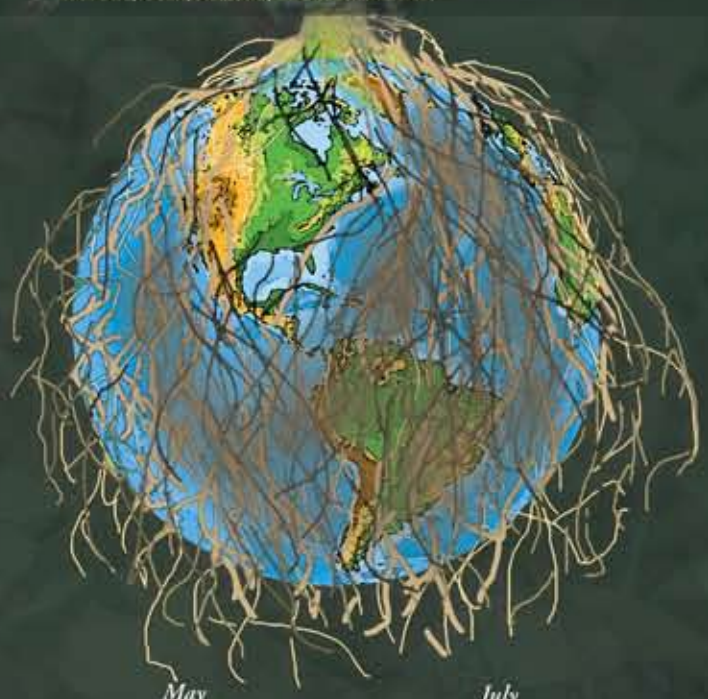
- A free-floating, extremely invasive aquatic fern, Giant salvinia possesses the capability of doubling its surface area every 5–7 days.
- Depletes oxygen from water, which results in fish kills.
- Degrades waterfowl habitat by blocking sunlight penetration to submerged aquatic plants.
- Has been documented in the Gulf regions of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Texas, and in the Colorado River in Arizona and California.

Yellow starthistle
Centaurea solstitialis L.

- A gray-green to blue-green annual, having winged stems, growing from 6 inches to 5 feet in height, its bright yellow flowers have long (1.0 to 1.25 inch), round yellow spines at the base.
- Extremely aggressive, it depletes soil moisture, displacing native plants and exerting a negative effect on wildlife.
- Poisonous to horses, causing a fatal neurological disorder.
- Primarily impacts California, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho; the plant has now moved east, significantly infesting areas in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Russian olive
Elaeagnus angustifolia L.

- Russian olive is a thorny shrub or tree that can grow to 30 feet in height.
- Tolerates shade and thrives in a variety of soil and moisture conditions, including bare mineral substrates.
- Introduced into the United States in the late 1800s, it was planted as an ornamental, as food for wildlife, or to form windbreaks.
- Found primarily in the central and western United States, Russian olive also occurs in the East, sometimes in association with another invasive woody species, autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*).



How You Can Help

- Learn to identify invasive plants in your area.
- Use native plants whenever possible in landscaping.
- Report weed sightings to your local County or land management agency.
- Support local, State, and Federal efforts to control invasive and noxious weeds.
- Prevent the spread of seeds by cleaning off hiking boots, dogs, boats, and vehicles.

For more information:

http://www.blm.gov/weeds
http://invasives.fws.gov
http://www.nps.gov/plants
http://plants.usda.gov
http://ficmnew.fws.gov
http://invasivespecies.gov
http://www.nawma.org
http://www.wssa.net
http://www.weedcenter.org

NIWAW
NATIONAL INVASIVE WEED AWARENESS WEEK
www.nawma.org/niwaw_index.htm

NIWAW Display at U.S. Botanic Gardens February 24–March 1, 2008

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