



NISAW
NATIONAL INVASIVE
SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK

Contact: Belle Bergner, Executive Director, North American Invasive Species Management Association, bbergner@naisma.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Slow the Spread: National Invasive Species Awareness Week Encourages Outreach and Education — May 16-23

Do your part to engage the public and elected officials about protecting natural habitats by slowing the spread of invasive species.

MILWAUKEE, WI – “Slow the spread” is an unexpected catchphrase of this spring. Due to the global coronavirus pandemic, we are all learning what invasive species managers have been doing for years.

The 10th annual National Invasive Species Awareness Week seeks to slow the spread of invasive plants, animals, pests, fungi and other organisms in land and water. A nationwide event, NISAW encourages local organizers to raise awareness of the threat of invasive species and what people can do to prevent their spread.

National Invasive Species Awareness Week—May 16-23—is an opportunity to highlight invasive species efforts carried out by local land managers, nonprofit organizations, and dedicated volunteers.

“Invasive species don’t respect boundaries, which makes them a continent-wide problem that starts at home,” said Belle Bergner, director of the North American Invasive Species Management Association. “The good news is that solutions start with everyone looking out their windows from home at what is on your property. If you are able to get to your local park, lake, or river, go with clean shoes and gear. Find a local event to learn how our invasive species managers and nonprofit organization leaders work hard making sure our lands and waters are friendly to native species of North America.”

NISAW gathers outdoor enthusiasts, land managers and elected officials to showcase their invasive species efforts and inspire others to address invasive species through management and prevention.

We encourage the following 13 actions for everyone who believes natural spaces are worth protecting from invasive species and wants to contribute to the cause:

1. Learn about invasive species, especially those found in your region. Your [county extension office](#) and the [National Invasive Species Information Center](#) are both trusted resources. Share what you know on social media (use the [NISAW social media images to get started](#)).
2. Clean hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles and other gear to stop invasive species from hitching a ride to a new location. Learn more at [PlayCleanGo.org](#).
3. Avoid dumping aquariums or live bait into waterways. Learn more at [Habitattitude.org](#).
4. Clean your fishing equipment and don't dump live bait. Learn more at [StopAquaticHitchhikers.org](#).
5. Don't move firewood. Instead, buy it where you'll burn it, or gather on site when permitted. Learn more at [DontMoveFirewood.org](#).
6. Slow the spread of invasive pests by taking extra care when traveling, gardening or moving recently killed plant material. Buy your plants from a reputable source. Avoid using invasive plant species at all costs. [Learn more at HungryPests.com](#).
7. Buy forage, hay, mulch and soil that are [certified as "weed free."](#)
8. Plant only non-invasive plants in your garden, and remove any known invaders.
9. Report new or expanded invasive species outbreaks to authorities. Here is a [state-by-state list of contacts](#).
10. [Volunteer to help](#) remove invasive species from public lands and natural areas.
11. Ask your political representatives at the [state](#), [local](#) and [national](#) level to support invasive species control efforts.
12. If your in-person gatherings get cancelled, try these other ideas:
 - i) Online: Host virtual events highlighting invasive species. Try to focus on identifying the species most abundant in this season and how viewers can safely prevent their spread.
 - ii) At local trails or parks: Post educational signs for a self-guided invasive species tours.
 - iii) At home: Remove invasive plants in your own backyard and dispose of them properly. Share what you're doing with friends and followers via text message and social media. (Don't forget to use the hashtags #NISAW and #InvasiveSpecies!)

- iv) Online and at home: [Engage local officials](#). Writing letters and op-eds that express your concern about invasive species and ideas to slow their spread is a good place to start.

13. Publicize your work (use the [NISAW radio PSA and local news release templates](#))

“Everyone can do something to prevent invasive species from taking over agricultural and natural environments, and we encourage organizations and individuals to take leadership teaching their community about how to solve invasive species issues locally,” Bergner says.

NISAW partners are here to help community efforts succeed. If your organization is hosting an event (virtual events encouraged!) or running an invasive species awareness campaign, we invite you to add to the free Local Events map and listing found here <https://www.playcleango.org/local-invasive-species-events>.

NISAW has curated a number of campaign materials for the public and the media which can be found at <https://www.nisaw.org/nisaw-toolkit/>, including the NISAW Media Toolkit, social media posts and graphics, templates for a press release and radio PSA.

#

The North American Invasive Species Management Association’s mission is to support, promote, and empower invasive species prevention and management in North America. For twenty-six years, NAISMA has been growing programs that bridge jurisdictional and geographic divides. In addition to organizing a variety of professional development opportunities, housing the Weed Free Forage & Gravel program, and operating the PlayCleanGo program, NAISMA is the lead partner on NISAW. Learn more at naisma.org.