

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Help prevent the spread of invasive species

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**MADISON, Wis.** – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources encourages all to participate in National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW), Feb. 23 through 27, a national event held by the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA).

This is a great time to remind the public of how they can help prevent the spread of invasive species year-round. The event is dedicated to raising awareness about invasive species, the threats they pose and the actions that can be taken to prevent their spread.

“The negative effects of invasive species include those on sport and commercial fishing, forestry and agriculture, and on users of untreated water such as power companies and municipal water plants,” said Karen Hyun, DNR Secretary. “These expenses are passed on to consumers through higher prices for everything from lumber to fish to utilities.”

The term “invasive” describes a wide range of nonnative organisms – introduced insects, plants and fungi – that spread and reproduce rapidly, taking advantage of the lack of natural checks and balances. Invasive species can displace and outcompete native species, causing major disturbances to habitat and ecosystem functionality.

“In Wisconsin forests, invasive shrubs such as nonnative buckthorns and honeysuckles prevent the regeneration of young native trees,” said Sec. Hyun. “This affects the quality of our forests and parks, disrupts natural plant and wildlife

habitats and creates long-term impacts on our \$28-billion-per-year forestry industry.”

The good news is that the public can help by taking steps toward basic care to greatly reduce the risk of spreading invasive species to the places that they love.

Among the many ways that all Wisconsinites can join the fight against the spread of invasives:

- Clean hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles and other gear in between outings.
- Volunteer to help remove invasive species from public lands and natural areas.
- Buy firewood where you’ll burn it. The use of certified or locally obtained firewood is required by Wisconsin statute, and all state-owned properties that offer camping areas sell firewood on-site.
- Take extra care when traveling, gardening or moving plant material. Buy your plants from a reputable source and plant native species to support your local ecosystem. Avoid using invasive plant species at all costs.
- Buy forage, hay, gravel and mulch that is certified as “weed-free.”
- Clean, drain and dry all watercraft, trailers and equipment when boating or fishing. Comply with watercraft inspection and decontamination requirements.
- Avoid dumping aquariums into waterways.
- Clean your fishing equipment and don’t dump live bait.

The DNR’s [Invasive Species webpage](#) offers plenty of information on what invasive species are and why it’s important to control them.

NAISMA offers a [webpage](#) with information on NISAW and a full schedule of events, including webinars, policy discussions, campaigns and other opportunities to take action.