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Fourteen More Invasive Plant Species Are Illegal in Chicago

The City of Chicago added 14 land-based invasive plant species to its Invasive Species Regulations, which includes 26 aquatic invasive species. Species that appear on the regulated list are illegal to import, sell and possess in the City of Chicago. **The list includes species that are not already prevalent in the region, but if established, have the potential to cause serious damage to our natural areas by out-competing native species for resources and altering the ecology.** Prevention efforts such as this are especially critical given that many of the species on the list have a greater likelihood of becoming established due to climate change, as winters become milder and ecosystems migrate northward.

The species were chosen in collaboration with an advisory group of industry leaders and experts in the field of plant ecology from the following institutions:

- Chicago Botanic Garden
- Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation's Bureau of Forestry
- Chicago Park District
- Forest Preserve District of Cook County
- Lake County Forest Preserve District
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Illinois Landscape Contractors Association
- Illinois Natural History Survey
- The Nature Conservancy
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- University of Notre Dame

Over 1,000 local and regional nurseries, landscape contractors, garden centers, and non-profit organizations, were invited to submit feedback before its finalization today. The City will continue to conduct education for businesses and the public with information about why these species are prohibited and recommended alternative non-invasive species.

Regulated Species List: This regulated list represents species that (1) have the potential to cause harm to regional natural areas and public lands and (2) are in trade and, therefore, can be regulated. While there are many more invasive species that could cause harm in the region, this list focuses on species that pose the most critical threat. This list includes all cultivars except those that have been proven by the scientific community to be functionally sterile.

Akebia quinata
Ampelopsis brevipedunculata
Anthriscus sylvestris
Celastrus orbiculatus
Humulus japonicus
Leymus arenarius
Ligustrum spp.
Miscanthus sacchariflorus
Paulownia tomentosa
Phellodendron amurense
Phellodendron japonica
Polygonum cuspidatum
Quercus acutissima
Ranunculus ficaria

Chocolate Vine
Elegans Porcelain Berry Vine
Wild Chervil
Oriental Bittersweet
Japanese Hops
Lyme Grass
Privet
Amur Silver Grass
Princess Tree
Amur Corktree
Japanese Corktree
Japanese Knotweed
Sawtooth Oak
Lesser Celandine

The Department of Environment will take a leading role in the outreach and enforcement of the ordinance. Enforcement visits to garden centers in the City will begin in spring 2009. If the public has questions or comments on this issue, they can contact 312-743-9283.

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