

What you can do

✓ **Dispose of invasive plant parts and seeds responsibly** at the Waste Management centre (for a reduced rate). Most invasive plants should not be composted. Contact the Comox Valley Regional District for additional details.

✓ **Learn which plants are invasive and do not purchase them.** Be suspicious of exotic plants promoted as 'fast spreaders' or 'vigorous self-seeders'.

✓ **If you can't remove invasive plants from your property, don't let them seed.**

✓ **Clean equipment, tools, vehicles and footwear before leaving an infested area.**

✓ **Educate others about invasive plants.**

✓ **Get involved** - Participate in local invasive plant programs such as Broombusters and the Comox Valley Naturalist Society. Contact the Comox Valley Regional District for additional details on how to participate. Visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/invasiveplants.

Report invasive plants

Online:

www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/plants/raw

Download App:

www.reportaweedbc.ca

In the Comox Valley Regional District phone Bylaw Compliance at 250-334-6000

In addition to being toxic, many of these plants have additional negative impacts that include: reduction of native biodiversity and habitat; adversely affecting agricultural food production and quality; and decreasing water quality and quantity.



Resources

Comox Valley Regional District website:
www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/invasiveplants

Coastal Invasive Species Committee:
www.coastalisc.com

Weeds BC:
www.weedsbc.ca

E-Flora BC:
The Electronic Atlas of the Flora of BC:
www.eflora.bc.ca

Report-A-Weed:
www.reportaweedbc.ca

Toxic Invasive Plants in the Comox Valley

Giant Hogweed
Spurge Laurel
Tansy Ragwort
Common Tansy
Yellow Flag Iris
English Holly

Including a highlight on Knotweed sp.

Spread the *Word*
Not the *Weed*

What are Invasive Plants?

Coastal Invasive Species Committee defines the term “Invasive plant” as any invasive alien plant species that has the potential to pose undesirable or detrimental impacts on humans, animals or ecosystems.

Invasive plants have the capacity to establish quickly and easily on both disturbed and un-disturbed sites, causing monocultures that exclude native plants and altering natural landscapes and habitats.

Why are Invasive Plants a Threat?

Once established, invasive plants are very difficult to control, negatively impacting biodiversity, property value, human health and safety, recreational, economic, cultural and aesthetic values.

Did you know that invasive plants are considered to be one of the greatest threats to biodiversity world-wide, second to habitat loss?



Giant Hogweed Leaf

A very tall (2-6 m) plant with leaves as much as 1.5 m across.

photo: A. Millham

Working Together



Knotweed

Sometimes called ornamental bamboo; hollow stems 2- 5m tall, reddish/purple speckled.

photo: C. Richman

What we are doing

- Control the spread of noxious weeds (refer to Comox Valley Regional District weed control regulation by-law) on public and private land in electoral areas A, B, C and Denman/Hornby Islands.
- Ensure that private properties remain free of weeds of concern.
- Noxious weeds can be disposed at the landfill at yard waste rate at: www.cswm.ca/fees.
- Offer waiver of disposal fees for “community volunteer clean-up of invasive species”.
- Provide information on alternatives to invasive plants for your garden.
- Supporting local invasive plant control projects; such as Broombusters, the Comox Valley Naturalist Society, Hornby Island Residents Rate Payers Association and the Spartina Eradication Project.

Protect our coastal community from these invasive plants

Invasive Knotweeds: Japanese, Bohemian and Giant (*Fallopia spp* or *Polygonum spp*)

Highlight on Knotweed sp. One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in the Comox Valley

Why is it a problem?

Very difficult to eradicate once established, grows 4 cm per day, compared to grass (0.15 cm/day); can cause soil erosion in riparian areas.

Re-sprouts from root or stem fragments as small as 1cm; Knotweed has been known to grow through 1 m of concrete.

What does it look like?

- Sometimes called ornamental bamboo; hollow stems 2- 5m tall, reddish/purple speckled.
- Leaves egg to heart-shaped with pointed tip, alternate, stalked; approx. 8-10 cm wide/15 cm long except for Giant Knotweed which is twice the size.
- Flowers (Aug.-Sept.) small white/green clusters.

Control

Please report any sightings of this species to Report A Weed.

Caution: it is best to let a professional remove this plant for you, contact: www.coastalisc.com

DO NOT COMPOST! You will only spread the problem further.

Knotweed

Growing along the Courtenay River



photo: A. Millham



photo: A. Millham



photo: L. Scott

Toxic Invasive Plants in the Comox Valley



photo: C. Richman

English Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Evergreen shrub or small tree (7 to 10 m tall) with dark red berries and dark green evergreen foliage.

Reason for Concern

Berries are toxic to people if ingested.

Control

- Cut mature trees at ground level, being sure to remove all plant material including berries which contain seeds.
- Monitor cut stumps for regrowth.



photo: D. Polster

Tansy Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

Biennial to short-lived perennial plant in the Sunflower family up to 1.2 m tall. The dark green leaves are deeply cut into irregular segments giving the plant a "ragged" appearance. The daisy-like bright yellow flowers are evident from July through September.

Reason for Concern

A poisonous plant to animals (especially cattle, horses and goats), causing liver dysfunction, photo-sensitivity and sometimes death. Flowers of tansy ragwort contain the highest percentage of the toxin. Trace amounts of the toxin can have cumulative effects on both animals and humans if long term exposure occurs.

Control

- Hand-pull isolated plants and small patches and remove as much of the root as possible.
- Mow/cut prior to flowering or seed set.



photo: L. Scott

Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

A very tall (2-6 m) plant with leaves as much as 1.5 m across. The leaves have stiff hairs on the underside and are compound and deeply cut. Stems are hollow with dark red-purple blotches. White umbrella-like flowers flower in late summer.

Reason for Concern

Severe human health hazard: Sap from the stalks and stem can cause severe burns. Scarring and blindness may result.

Control

Caution: It is best to let a professional remove this plant for you. If you are going to remove the plant yourself:

- Always wear goggles, waterproof gloves and clothing; cover exposed skin.
- Always bag seed heads, seal tightly and put in regular waste stream; transport rest of plant in plastic bags to the landfill or pile on site to dry out (will no longer be toxic once dry) – never compost.
- Thoroughly wash all equipment that has come into contact with the plant.



photo: District of Saanich



photo: C. Richman



photo: R. Mueller



photo: A. Millham

Spurge Laurel (*Daphne laureola*)

An evergreen shrub, shade-tolerant and reminiscent of rhododendron, 0.5 – 1.8 m tall. Leaves are very dark green, shiny, smooth and thick. The twigs are stout and have a strong odour when cut. Small yellow flowers develop into red then purple-black berries.

Reason for Concern

The berries, leaves and bark are poisonous to humans, cats and dogs and handling the plant can cause dermatitis.

Control

Caution: wear gloves and other protective clothing when cutting or handling as the sap, fruit and leaves contain irritating toxins, which may be volatile.

- Hand-pull seedlings and young plants, or pull with a weed wrench or similar tool to remove the entire root.
- Cut older plants below the soil line.



photo: D. Hanna



photo: L. Scott

Common Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*)

This aromatic plant, with button-shaped yellow flowers and coarse, fern-like leaves are alternate and deeply divided. Grows up to 1.5 m tall and is common in the region.

Reason for Concern

Caution: The leaves and flowers are toxic if consumed in large quantities by humans or livestock, but can be grazed safely by sheep and goats. The volatile oil contains toxic compounds and can cause convulsions as well as liver and brain damage.

Control

- Wear gloves and other protective clothing if hand pulling to prevent skin irritation or other illness.
- Mow sites very low to the ground before July to prevent seed production.
- Hand-pull and dig the roots out to effectively control infestations.

Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

Has distinctive 'iris-look' with bright yellow flowers. Leaves narrow, sword shaped and dark green with prominent mid-rib. Perennial plant that is found in wet areas. When not in flower, you can tell it apart from native cattail by its leaves. Yellow iris leaves will be arranged in a flat fan-like shape, with a pronounced center vein.

Reason for Concern

Toxic if ingested by livestock and humans; causes dermatitis in sensitive humans.

Control

- Dig up small populations manually and remove all of root mass.
- For large populations, clip seed heads to prevent further spread. Cutting plants close to the ground several times a year has been effective if roots cannot be dug out.



photo: R. Mueller

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