

# Update from the Alberta Invasive Species Council (AISC) July 21, 2021

The AISC is very excited to be revitalizing the Alberta Certified Weed Free Forage program in partnership with the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Through this program forage can be inspected and certified as weed free per the North American Invasive Species Management Association's Weed Free Products Standards. If you are a producer interested in having your forage certified as weed free, contact your local county office or the AISC. If you are a buyer looking to purchase certified weed free forage visit our [website](#) for a list of producers with inventory.



The Biocontrol Release Program has started and ended this summer. The AISC offered one agent for release this season: the leafy spurge beetle, *Aphthona* spp. This biocontrol agent controls the invasive leafy spurge plant by feeding on the roots stunting the stem growth and reducing the root function during its larval stage in the winter and feeds on the leaves and flowers after emerging as adults in the summer. The program released a total of 40 orders to new and existing infestations of leafy spurge around Alberta in partnership with various stakeholders and counties in the province.

The debut of the new and updated EDDMapS (Early Detection and Distribution Mapping Systems) launched in June. Thanks to funding from the Alberta Conservation Association, this smartphone app is free to download and can be used to report invasive species anywhere you might find them. Included in the app are photos and descriptions of all invasive species and distribution maps that are created from all previous invasive species reports. All reports are verified by identification experts. EDDMapS is now nationwide so distribution maps can be shared across Canada – please remove the EDDMapS Alberta app from your phone as this will no longer be updated. In honor of the app launch, the AISC has been hosting monthly reporting contests encouraging users to submit as many reports as possible for a featured species before the month ends for a chance to win a prize pack – only a few days left in July to report Himalayan balsam, OR tune in to see the featured species for August – hint it's one of the knapweeds! This contest will be held from June to October, so be sure to download the free app and participate!





The 'Squeal on Pigs!' campaign was also funded through the Canadian Agriculture Partnership and works to raise awareness of wild boar at large (feral pigs) in Alberta. The AISC works with numerous partners to create awareness about this growing and very serious problem, and provide information on what to look for and how to report observations of wild boar at large in Alberta (one of those reporting methods is through the EDDMapS app!).

The Grow Me Instead campaign continues to help you to Be Plantwise and choose non-invasive plants for your gardens and communities! The coveted brochure has been updated and printed to include new invasive species and their suggested alternatives. Before choosing a plant to grow, check reliable sources of information, such as the AISC's fact sheets, ensure the plant or seed pack is properly labeled and avoid using wildflower mixes, as they often have invasive species seeds in them. For copies of the new brochure or more details on how to Be Plantwise, please contact the AISC or check out our website!



With summer in full swing, transporting firewood may seem harmless when you're out camping or enjoying the smoky flavor on a sweet s'more, but moving firewood from one location to another can inadvertently move invasive species to new areas with harmful results for both our forests and urban trees. Always remember, never bring firewood to a national park and it is against both Canadian and US laws to bring untreated firewood across our common border. If you do need to move firewood, don't move it more than 80 km, less than 20 km is ideal. Trees in our forests and urban landscapes are dead or dying from invasive forest pests and disease, so please be aware of firewood movement restrictions and buy local, burn local!



The Clean, Drain, Dry campaign has been operating business as usual for the province! As of June 28<sup>th</sup>, there have been a total of 7 mussel-fouled boats intercepted at watercraft inspection stations, including the latest discovery at the station open 24 hours a day. Stopping at an open inspection station is mandatory (with your motorized and non-motorized watercraft) – skipping may result in a \$324 fine. Please expect to be inspected, as well as have your drain plug pulled as leaving your plug in place while transporting a watercraft may result in a \$180 fine. These simple acts will help reduce the spread of invasive plants and organisms to Alberta waters, so please clean, drain dry all gear and watercrafts that come in contact with the water!



Over the past year, many Albertans have been adopting new pets! However, some of the most serious invasive species were originally sold as pets or plants for water gardens and aquariums. Don't let it loose! Some people believe that when they don't want their pets, or it has become too much to care for, the best thing to do is to release it into the 'wild. Unfortunately these species often thrive and have the potential to become invasive! Please never release your pet, plants or aquarium water into rivers, streams or lakes! Instead, unwanted pets can be disposed of humanely by returning them to pet stores, donating to schools, science centres, given away or brought to a veterinarian to euthanize the animal humanely. Additionally, make sure to bury your fish

after it passes, as flushing it can lead to the spread of unwanted diseases and dry or freeze unwanted aquatic plant material and add it to non-composted trash.

Finally, June 5<sup>th</sup> kicked off the second annual PlayCleanGo Awareness Week where the AISC participated virtually by attending webinars and creating daily content for all social media channels! This week, and the campaign itself highlights the importance of stopping the spread of invasive species and the role we play when enjoying the great outdoors! Stopping invasive species in your tracks is quick and easy! Remember to come clean and leave clean. After enjoying your adventure thoroughly clean your shoes, socks, gear, pets, horses, and watercrafts by removing any dirt, plants and hidden pests. That's it! Go out and enjoy our beautiful province without the worry of transporting invasive species.



This little, but big, non-profit organization helps many different stakeholders in the management of invasive species. Do you have questions about invasive species in your area? Do you need assistance identifying an invasive plant? The AISC [website](#) is packed full of useful resources to help you identify, report, and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. Are you interested in supporting the AISC by becoming an annual member? Are you involved with invasive species and want sit on our board of directors? There are so many ways to get involved. Follow AISC's social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), visit our website [www.abinvasives.ca](http://www.abinvasives.ca), email us at [info@abinvasives.ca](mailto:info@abinvasives.ca); or call 587 999 0954.