

RESPONDING TO OHIO'S PLANT INVADERS. Sarena M. Selbo, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068.

Over the past couple of years, there has been a growing awareness of the problems that invasive species present to the protection of biodiversity in our natural areas. Invasives are the second greatest threat to rare species in the United States, following habitat loss and degradation. Approximately one-fourth of the plant species known to occur in Ohio originate from other parts of the continent or the world. These species are commonly called non-native, exotic or alien because they were not known from Ohio prior to the time of substantial European settlement, around 1750. Several agencies throughout Ohio have been involved in educating the public on this topic. In response to continued interest, a working group (soon to become a non-profit, Invasive Species Council) was formed to address some of the questions and information needs in Ohio. The main purpose of the Council is to gather together those individuals who have a shared interest in taking additional steps to address various aspects of the invasive species issues in Ohio. Participants in the Council include state, federal and local natural resource agencies, garden clubs, university researchers, arboretums, botanical gardens, the landscaping industry, and others. The working groups of the Council include: 1) education and public outreach, 2) control and restoration, 3) distribution and documentation, and 4) research and science. Ongoing actions of the working groups continue to educate the public and add to our understanding of invasive plant management in Ohio.