

INVASIVE PLANTS: WORKING WITH THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY ON ADOPTING VOLUNTARY CODES OF CONDUCT. Valerie Vartanian, The Nature Conservancy.

Wildland weeds are a major threat to biodiversity and human endeavors. Current Federal regulation does not address invasive plant introductions, and State regulations are minimal in controlling invasive plant movement. Regulation alone cannot protect wildlands from invasive plants. In order to effectively control the introduction of invasive plant species through venues such as gardens and landscaping, the horticulture industry is teaming up with the environmental community to adopt and implement a voluntary set of industry-created rules known as the Voluntary Codes of Conduct. The Nature Conservancy and the Missouri Botanical Garden are supporting these efforts by inviting businesses throughout the country to test implement the codes and participate in a survey that will provide information on the effectiveness of this voluntary method. Ultimately, the long-term benefit will be the reduction of harmful exotic plants invading wildlands through gardens and landscaping. This, along with other preventative or early detection and rapid response measures will go a long way towards reducing the pressure on wildland management budgets as well as preserving native species, habitats, and ecosystems.