



National Botanic Gardens of Ireland:

Draft Code of Conduct on the management of actual or potentially invasive species

In recent years, the Gardens have become more concerned about invasive plants, recognising that this is an increasing problem worldwide. It will also be the policy of the Gardens to evaluate many (all?) of the plants collected abroad through its plant collecting expeditions and received by exchange with other institutions before they enter the permanent plant collections

The Gardens' Collection Policy states that any plant "which has the potential to threaten the genetic diversity of local native populations, overly aggressive behaviour (weediness), or the ability to introduce pests or diseases will be screened and evaluated before being accepted into the collection."

Today, with an increased awareness about the environmental and economic threats posed by invasive species, the National Botanic Gardens are expanding and strengthening its invasive plant policy. It should be noted, however, that most exotic plants are not invasive and greatly enrich our lives.

1. Species known to be invasive in Ireland will not be added to the Gardens' permanent collection. When species are determined to present a risk of becoming invasive, they will be removed from the collection and destroyed. The Garden will also develop, utilize and promote a list of acceptable non-invasive plants with similar landscape use as the plants being removed.

2. All species on a list of known invasive species (to be developed) will be assigned one of two courses of action:

(1) **Remove** – For known invasive species or cultivars, remove from Garden grounds as soon as possible and do not add to the Garden's collection in future.

(2) **Phase out** – For species that pose a lesser invasive risk, form significant structural features in landscape and will be costly and time-consuming to replace, phase out from the Garden over a five- to 10-year period.

For additional taxa where invasiveness is suspected but not yet understood, evaluation will take place, or taxa will be placed on a watch list for further study.

3. Interpretation about many of the species under evaluation will be provided. The list will be reviewed annually and revised as needed.
4. Besides following all laws on importation and quarantine of plant materials across political boundaries, the Garden will perform risk assessment for all plants introduced to the Garden via its acquisitions policy. Species new to Ireland, whether herbaceous or woody, will also be evaluated for at least four years after reaching reproductive maturity. The evaluation must be completed prior to the species' inclusion in the permanent collections.
5. The National Botanic Gardens will not distribute plants, seeds or cuttings or other propagules of any germplasm within its collections that is on the Gardens' invasive species list or under evaluation for invasiveness.
6. The Garden will work to control invasive species in native habitats, river banks, ponds and throughout the grounds of the Gardens. Staff training in recognition and removal of invasive species will be implemented. The Garden will disseminate information about invasive species control based on its experiences.
7. The Gardens will conduct research on the biology of invasiveness and assist with the design and implementation of evaluation studies on the invasive potential of untested plant species.
8. The Gardens will evaluate the invasive potential of untested plants, and when appropriate, strive to develop non-invasive forms of known-to-be invasive landscape plants.
9. The National Botanic Gardens will educate the public and the nursery industry about preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species. Staff will be asked to provide information about invasiveness, and not to recommend plants that the Gardens are removing from the collections based on the issue of invasiveness.
10. The Garden will assess the threat that popular or common horticultural plants may present to related native plants in the wild. The possibility of hybridization threatening wild plant populations and their genetic integrity will be assessed. If a significant risk is present, alternatives to those horticultural plants will be sought.