



Best Management Practices: Pathways of Invasion

Pathways of Invasion are the means by which invasive species establish and spread. The disruption of these pathways is an essential part of invasive species management and by taking simple steps, we can help minimize the risk of spread.

Pathways of Invasion can be human-aided or natural. Human-aided pathways are those caused or enhanced by human activities. These may be intentional, such as the transport of species beyond their native range for the pet trade or other living industries, or unintentional, as when seeds or organisms adhere to hiking boots, vehicles or boats and are inadvertently carried to new locations. In contrast, natural pathways involve a species' use of wind, water or wildlife for seed dispersal or movement, or their own adaptations for movement such as the ability to fly.

Several tools are available for addressing Pathways of Invasion. For human-aided pathways, both regulation and education play key roles. Regulations can be highly effective when addressing the movement of species or pathways connected to various industries (e.g., landscaping, agriculture). On the other hand, education can be more effective for addressing pathways involving everyday human activities such as gardening, hiking or other forms of outdoor recreation. For natural pathways, containment or suppression strategies can be effective, for example mowing to prevent seed production.

In New York State, regulations prohibit the sale and transport of certain invasive species within the state and require individuals to take reasonable precautions to avoid moving organisms between water bodies. Additionally, organizations like the PRISMs (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) play an important educational role by teaching community members simple, effective prevention measures. Spread prevention is key to disrupting Pathways of Invasion and is one of our most effective tools to manage invasive species.



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Disrupt Pathways of Invasion With These Small Steps

Nurseries & Landscaping

Plant only native and non-invasive plants in your landscaping and ask your local supplier to provide more native plant options. Check seed mix labels and inspect soil, mulch and compost (bagged, bulk and potted) for invasive species. Purchase bare-root plants, if possible.

Aquariums

Donate unwanted plants and animals to a nature center, zoo or aquarium, or to a knowledgeable friend or family member. Contact your local retailer about how to return fish and other animals or consult a veterinarian on how to humanely dispose of them. Never dump unwanted plants and animals in or near waterways.

Watercraft

Clean, drain and dry your boat, equipment and trailer after you leave a body of water and before you enter a new one. Properly dispose of the removed material - many boat launches have disposal stations available.

Fishing Bait

Don't dump unused bait - properly dispose of bait on land or in the trash, never in or near water.

Outdoor Gear

Clean off boots, fishing gear, clothes and camping equipment before and after use. Many trails have boot brush stations, but you can be prepared by keeping a brush in your vehicle.

Firewood

Don't move firewood - burn it where you buy it and leave any unused wood for the next person.

Mowers

Clean mowers frequently. Don't mow from areas infested with invasive species into those without. To avoid further spread, don't mow when plants are seeding and consider using the mulch bag on hand mowers to collect material.

Construction

Clean all equipment prior to beginning work and leave equipment at an on-site staging area during construction. Consider purchasing "clean fill" that is free of invasive species seed and plant material.



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