Invasive Exotic Species Ranking for Southern Ontario

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This is a listing of the invasive exotic species found in natural habitats in southern Ontario according to the observations of restorationists and nursery owners we have consulted over the past 10 years and available written documents (see references).

Most exotic species that are found in natural areas do not appear to be a problem for restoration or protection of native biodiversity. They co-exist with indigenous (native) species and can increase local biodiversity without dominating the site. There is sometimes an argument made that since good quality natural habitats are so rare, the exotic species are taking up space that could potentially be occupied by indigenous plants, some of which are uncommon or rare. However this is not a practical approach in most areas since these areas are and will continue to be highly impacted by human activities. A goal of 100% indigenous species, although desirable, is not possible on most sites.

Some species, while highly invasive in early-successional situations, are eventually outcompeted by native shade-tolerant species. The choice to control or not will depend on the objectives of a project.

Any exotic species can become invasive if provided with optimum soil, moisture, and disturbance conditions. We have tried to limit this list to those species that are most problematic in Ontario.

Four categories have been used here. Some species may belong in more than one category, but they are listed here where they have the greatest negative effect. This list does not attempt to prioritize these species for ease of control, since control options can vary and new research may provide new options. We have placed species in each category based on reports and observed effects. The level of negative effect for each species is somewhat subjective in the absence of a formal survey.

"Invades" as used here means that an exotic species becomes a significant component of the plant community. "Dominates" means that the species excludes most other species. "Native" as used here means indigenous, and is used for simplicity.

Plants marked with an asterisk (*) may be indigenous to parts of Ontario, but have aggressive behaviour that threatens natural biodiversity (and there seems little doubt that the range expansion was aided by human activities). They are considered invasive exotic plants outside their natural range.

Aggressive invasive exotic species that can dominate a site to exclude all other species and remain dominant on the site indefinitely. These are a threat to natural areas wherever they occur because they can reproduce by means that allow them to move long distances. Many of these are dispersed by birds, wind, water, or vegetative reproduction.

These are the top priority for control, but control may be difficult. Eradication may be the only option for long-term success.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Effect on Natural Area
Acer negundo*	Manitoba maple	takes place of native early-successional forest,
-		aggressively invades all habitat types
Aegopodium podagraria	Goutweed	dominates forest understorey
Alliaria petiolata Garlic musta	ard dominates forest her	b layer
Alnus glutinosa	Black alder	dominates wetlands, causes changes by shading
Betula pendula	European birch	dominates open wetlands, causes changes by shading
Butomus umbellatus	Flowering rush	dominates open marshes
Cirsium arvenseCanada this	tle dominates meadows	, prairies, forest edges
Coronilla varia	Crown vetch	dominates disturbed meadows
Cynanchum nigrum	Black swallow-wort	dominates meadows & forest understorey
Cynanchum rossicum	Pale swallow-wort	dominates meadows & forest understorey
Elaeagnus umbellata	Autumn olive	dominates forest edges
Glyceria maxima	Rough manna grass	dominates wet meadows
Hesperis matronalis	Dames rocket	dominates open forest understorey & meadows
Hydrocharis morsus-ranae	European frog-bit	dominates open water habitats
Impatiens glandulifera	Himalayan balsam	dominates forests & wet meadows
Lonicera japonica	Japanese honeysuckle	dominates forest understorey in northern U.S.
Lonicera maackii	Amur honeysuckle	invades meadows & forest edges
Lonicera morrowi	Morrow's honeysuckle	invades meadows & forest edges
Lonicera tatarica	Tartarian honeysuckle	invades meadows & forest edges
Lonicera xylosteum	Eur. fly honeysuckle	invades meadows & forest edges
Lythrum salicaria	Purple loosestrife	dominates wetlands
Morus alba	White mulberry	hybridizes with rare <i>M. rubra</i>
Myriophyllum spicatum	Eurasian water milfoil	dominates open water habitats
Nymphoides peltatum	Floating heart	dominates open water habitats
Phragmites australis*	Common reed	dominates wetlands & wet meadows
Potamogeton crispus	Curly pondweed	dominates open water habitats in SW Ontario
Rhamnus cathartica	Common buckthorn	dominates forest understorey, meadows & prairies
Rhamnus frangula	Glossy buckthorn	dominates wetlands
Rosa multiflora	Multiflora rose	dominates forest edges

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Exotic species that are highly invasive but tend to only dominate certain niches or do not spread rapidly from major concentrations. Many of these spread vegetatively or by seeds that drop close to the parent plant. They may have been deliberately planted and persist in dense populations for long periods. Control where necessary and limit their spread to other areas.

<u>Scientific Name</u> Acer platanoides Acer pseudoplatanus Ailanthus altissima Celastrus orbiculatus	<u>Common Name</u> Norway maple Sycamore maple Tree of Heaven Oriental bittersweet	Effect on Natural Area dominates forest canopy dominates forest canopy replaces native early-successional forest dominates forests and forest edges, has become more
Galium mollugo	White bedstraw	common than native <i>C. scandens.</i> invades meadows
Lotus corniculatus	Bird-foot trefoil	dominates meadows & prairies
Lysimachia nummularia	Moneywort	dominates wet forest understorey
Melilotus alba	White sweet clover	dominates meadows & prairies
Melilotus officinalis	Yellow sweet-clover	dominates meadows & prairies
Pinus sylvestris	Scots pine	invades meadows
Poa pratensis	Kentucky bluegrass	dominates prairies
Polygonum cuspidatum	Japanese knotweed	dominates wet meadows & moist forests
Populus alba	White poplar	invades meadows
Robinia pseudo-acacia	Black locust	invades meadows
Scilla siberica	Scilla	dominates spring ephemerals in forest understorey
Sedum acre	Mossy stonecrop	invades alvars
Syringa vulgaris Lilac	dominates shallow li	mestone areas, persists for decades
Ulmus pumila	Siberian elm	invades prairies, causes changes by shading
Vicia cracca	Cow vetch	dominates meadows & prairies
Vinca minor	Periwinkle	dominates forest understorey

Exotic species that are moderately invasive but can become locally dominant when the proper conditions exist. Control where necessary and limit their spread to other areas.

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	vicia tetrasperma	Siender vetch	invades meadows

Exotic species that do not pose a serious threat to natural areas unless they are competing directly with more desirable vegetation. These can often be tolerated in restoration projects if they are already present. They may eventually be replaced through natural succession or management. Control where necessary and limit their spread to other areas.

Some of these exotic species are substituted in restoration projects for indigenous species but may not reproduce aggressively once established. They do occupy space that desirable indigenous species require and do not achieve project objectives when used.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Effect on Natural Area
Acer ginnala	Amur maple	frequently planted
Ajuga reptans	Creeping bugleweed	persists in forest understorey & edges
Bromus inermis	Smooth brome	resists conversion to native meadow & prairie
Campanula rapunculoides	Creeping bellflower	invades forest edges & meadows
Euphorbia esulaLeafy spurge		
Glechoma hederacea		ith meadow & prairie species
Hemerocallis fulva	Orange Day lily	dominates meadows
Hypericum perforatum	St. John's-wort	can dominate meadows
Inula helenium	Elecampane	invades meadows
Iris pseudacorus	Yellow flaginvades wetl	ands
Ligustrum vulgare	Privet	invades forest edges
Linaria vulgaris	Butter-and-eggs	invades meadows
Lolium perenne	Perennial rye grass	competes with meadow & prairie species
Malva moschata	Musk mallow	invades meadows
Medicago lupulina	Black medick	invades meadows
Medicago sativaAlfalfa	invades meadows &	prairies
Myosotis scorpioides	True forget-me-not	dominates shaded seepage areas
Mentha x piperita	Peppermint	invades meadows
Nepeta cataria	Catnip	invades meadows
Origanum vulgare	Wild marjoram	invades disturbed meadows
Pachysandra terminalis	Japanese spurge	persists in forest understorey & edges
Populus x canadensis	Carolina poplar	often misidentified as <i>P. deltoides</i> by nurseries
Rumex acetosella	Sheep sorrel	invades meadows
Salix caprea	Goat willow	frequently substituted for S. discolor
Salix purpurea	Purple willow	invades wetlands, displaces native Salix spp.
Senecio jacobaea	Tansy groundsel	invades meadows
Setaria sp.	Foxtail grasses	invade meadows, resist invasion by natives
Sorbus aucuparia	European Mountain-ash	n invades forests
Symphoricarpus albus var laevigatus	Western snowberry	frequently substituted for S. albus var albus
Trifolium arvense	Rabbit-foot clover	invades meadows
Trifolium pratense	Red clover	invades meadows
Trifolium repens White clover	invades meadows	
Tussilago farfara	Sweet coltsfoot	invades wet meadows & riverbanks
Ulmus glabra	Scotch elm	invades disturbed forests
Viburnum opulus ssp. opulus	Guelder rose	frequently substituted for <i>V. opulus</i> ssp. <i>trilobum</i> ; has replaced <i>V. trilobum</i> across most of southern Ontario

Invasive Exotic Species Ranking for Southern Ontario - January 2002

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Potentially Invasive Exotic Species to Monitor

Some of these species have the potential to become invasive exotics in Ontario. They can reproduce aggressively on occasion but have not been shown to be a serious threat to natural areas in Ontario. Some are very similar to indigenous species and could simply have been overlooked.

<u>Scientific Name</u> Alnus incana ssp. incana	<u>Common Name</u> European white alder	<u>Risk to Natural Areas</u> similar to Speckled alder <i>A. incana ssp. rugosa</i> , nursery trade is using European name to describe <i>A. rugosa</i> as well, creating the possibility of misidentification.		
Ampelopsis brevipedunculat	a Porcelain-berry	invasive in northeast U.S.		
Artemisia vulgaris	Common mugwort	highly invasive in New York City natural areas		
Cabomba caroliniana	Fanwort	invasive in New England lakes		
Cornus sericea	Red osier dogwood	ambiguous species name being used in the nursery trade to describe <i>C. stolonifera</i> , creating possibility of misidentification with similar Eurasian red dogwoods.		
Daphne mezereum	Mezer's Daphne	has invaded moist forests in S. Ontario		
Egeria densa	Waterweed	known to be invasive in Massachusetts wetlands		
Fraxinus excelsior	European ash	sometimes misidentified as <i>F. nigra</i> , can reproduce in shade		
Isatis tinctoria	Dyer's woad	a new invader to the Bruce Peninsula		
Lapsana communis	Nipplewort			
Najas minor	Minor naiad	invasive in New York and New England waterways		
Humulus lupulus	Common hop	locally invasive in Ontario		
Hydrilla verticillata	Hydrilla	known to be invasive in mid-Atlantic states of U.S.		
Phalaris arundinacea*	Reed canary grass	hypothesized that a European strain dominates wet meadows, or native species may be responding to high nutrient availability, to be determined.		
Populus tremulaEuropean aspen very similar to P. tremuloides				
Prunus avium		but does not seem to dominate natural areas		
Prunus mahaleb	Perfumed cherry			
Sambucus racemosa	European red elder	may be misidentified as S. pubens		
Tilia cordata	European linden	reproduces but does not seem to dominate natural areas		
Trapa natans	Water-chestnut	invasive in New York and New England waterways		
Typha sp.	Exotic cattail species	being sold in nursery trade in northeast U.S.		
Viola odorata	Sweet violet	very aggressive garden plant, many <i>Viola sp.</i> are difficult to identify accurately, leading to misidentification.		

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