

OVERVIEW OF THE MAINE ADVISORY LIST OF INVASIVE PLANTS

What is the Advisory List?

The Advisory List of Invasive Plants (“Advisory List”) is a list of non-native plants found to pose a threat to habitats and natural resources in Maine. Listed plants are identified through a scientific evaluation process that focuses on the plants’ ecological impacts and biological traits. Plant species identified as invasive are ranked in one of four categories ranging from “severely invasive” to “potential to be invasive, monitor.” The Advisory List is an informational tool available for use by landowners, wildlife biologists, foresters, land stewards, conservation commissions, and others interested in managing invasive plants and preventing their spread. It is intended for education and outreach, land management, and other non-regulatory uses. The Advisory List is maintained by the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP), within the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). The Terrestrial Invasive Plants Scientific Advisory Committee (TIPSAC), which is composed of biologists, resource managers, and land stewardship professionals, assisted with the development of the Advisory List, and has unanimously endorsed it.

How is the Advisory List different than the Do Not Sell list?

The Do Not Sell list is a regulatory list of terrestrial invasive plants found in the horticulture trade. Plants on the Do Not Sell list may not be imported, exported, bought, sold, or intentionally propagated for sale. An important distinction between the two lists is that the Do Not Sell list only addresses species known from the horticulture trade, while the Advisory List includes numerous species not sold for planting, which are invasive via other pathways. The Do Not Sell list was formally established in DACF rules under a directive from the Legislature and is maintained by the DACF Horticulture Program. An Invasive Plant Working Group composed of biologists, horticulture professionals, and land managers assisted with the development of the Do Not Sell list. The Horticulture Program enforces the Do Not Sell list via stop-sale orders and fines.

Advisory List review process

A preliminary list, a precursor to the Advisory List, was first developed in 1999 and was last updated in 2006. At that time, invasive plants were identified based on a review of plant traits and distributions by a group of botanical professionals. Since then, rigorous, quantitative assessments have become the preferred method for evaluating plant invasiveness. In 2017-2018, with TIPSAC guidance, MNAP developed two tools for use in developing the Advisory List: 1) a brief *Screening Process* addressing non-native plant climatic suitability and dispersal capabilities, and 2) a *Full Evaluation* addressing multiple ecological impacts and species’ biological traits. The Screening Process allows for quick evaluation of new non-native plants suggested by the TIPSAC and/or gleaned from a review of other New England states’ invasive plants lists, to assess whether they merit review in the lengthier, quantitative Full Evaluation. Plants already on the preliminary list or Do Not Sell list went directly into the Full Evaluation; 123 plants received Full Evaluation. Notable results include:

- 52 plants received a ranking of “Severely invasive”
- 31 plants received a ranking of “Very invasive”
- 20 plants received a ranking of “Invasive, habitat-specific threats”
- 12 plants received a ranking of “Potential to be invasive, monitor”
- 6 plants had insufficient information to evaluate their invasiveness
- 2 plants scored below the threshold for invasiveness at this time

The results were reviewed by the TIPSAC which unanimously endorsed the Advisory List. MNAP, with guidance from the TIPSAC, has established a nomination form with which anyone can propose a new species for an invasiveness evaluation. MNAP and the TIPSAC intend to review any nominations annually.

How are aquatic plants listed in Maine?

Aquatic plants may be emergent, floating, or submersed in freshwater ponds, lakes, and slow-moving rivers and streams. Invasive aquatic plants are a severe threat to Maine’s waterbodies, and can quickly establish and spread to infest large areas. In Maine, invasive aquatic plants are listed and regulated in statute (38 MRS §410-N and §419-C). The Maine Department of Environmental Protection enforces the statutes that ban the transport, introduction, and sale of invasive aquatic plants. The Advisory List also includes invasive aquatic plants as an informational resource.

Public comment opportunities and plans for publicizing the Advisory List

- MNAP is accepting written comments on the Advisory List until **June 4, 2019.**
- Public comments will be received at a public meeting/listening session to be held at the Deering Building, Room 101, at 90 Blossam Lane, Augusta, ME 04333, from 5-7pm on Tuesday, **June 4, 2019.**

MNAP is dedicated to making the Advisory List as widely available as possible. The list will be posted on the MNAP website and links will be provided to species-specific management resources.

To comment on the proposed Advisory List, please attend the Public Meeting or send comments to:

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