



## CITY NEWS



### New Efforts by the City of Portland for Invasive Plant Management

*By Tricia R. Sears, Bureau of Planning, City of Portland*

**I**nvasive plant species are a problem for the city of Portland and other jurisdictions; the consequences include environmental impacts and economic impacts. In November 2007, the city launched its “Grey to Green Initiative” to accelerate the implementation of the Portland Watershed Management Plan 2005 (PWMP). The Portland City Council adopted the PWMP in 2005 to guide city decisions and projects by providing a comprehensive approach to restoring watershed health.

Grey to Green increases the city’s investment in green stormwater management systems that promote healthy watersheds and clean rivers and streams. Through Grey to Green, the city is building more green streets and ecoroofs, planting more trees, acquiring more sensitive natural areas, removing culverts that impede fish passage, and stepping up efforts to control invasive plants. The invasive plant species control program aims to protect the best parks



*English Ivy*

habitat; prevent the establishment of new plant invaders; add invasive plant management into the city’s comprehensive plan; and incorporate new invasive plant regulations into existing city codes.

The Grey to Green Program Development Charter provides a very clear statement of intent to fight invasive plants:

“Invasive plants are the second largest threat to native biodiversity (behind habitat loss) and they are one of the primary factors that lead to a species listing under the Endangered Species Act. Invasive plants degrade water quality, reduce biodiversity, impair habitat, decrease tree populations and growth rates, increase the likelihood and spread of fire, decrease the ability of stormwater infiltration, and increase soil erosion. Removing invasive species and planting native vegetation is a critical strategy for improvement and maintenance of watershed health...”

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As part of the Grey to Green effort, the city of Portland is evaluating its policies and rules relating to invasive plants, and recommending potential updates and improvements.



The project includes these four components.

- 1. Update the Portland Plant List (PPL) to include priority ranks and guidance regarding invasive plants.** Staff will propose revisions to the PPL so that it is more useful, generally, and so that it can be used to inform city and community invasive species management activities, program development, and priority-setting.
- 2. Evaluate opportunities to improve invasive plant control through development and redevelopment, including updates to city codes and rules.** Staff will evaluate various city codes to determine how they could be used as effectively as possible to manage invasive plant species.
- 3. Coordinate with Portland Plan project to help ensure that invasive species are addressed appropriately in the Comprehensive Plan Update and Portland Plan work plan.**
- 4. Research the feasibility of establishing a local noxious or invasive weed law.** Staff will analyze the legality and the potential benefits, costs, and impacts of establishing a local noxious weed law. Staff will also research other jurisdictions, and identify if and how such a law might work in the city of Portland.

### **Request for Information**

As part of our research, the city of Portland is seeking information about what types of tools other cities in Oregon, and elsewhere, are using to manage, control, and/or regulate invasive plant species. If you have information on this topic, or if you would like to be kept apprised of this project, please contact Tricia R. Sears at [tricia.sears@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:tricia.sears@ci.portland.or.us) or (503) 823-1174.

For more information about the city of Portland's Grey to Green program, or the city's Invasive Plant Management plans, please contact Jennifer Goodridge at [jennifer.goodridge@bes.ci.portland.or.us](mailto:jennifer.goodridge@bes.ci.portland.or.us) or (503) 823-4899.

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