

Virginia Invasive Plant Species List



The Virginia Invasive Plant Species List comprises species that are established — or may become established — in Virginia, cause economic and ecological harm, and present ongoing management issues.

The list is for educational purposes only and has no regulatory authority.

To be included on the list, there must be demonstrable evidence that a species poses a threat to Virginia's forests, native grasslands, wetlands or waterways.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Invasive Species Assessment Protocol, approved by the Virginia Invasive Species Working Group, May 2015, was used to conduct a risk assessment for each listed species. Species were ranked as exhibiting **high**, **medium** or **low** levels of invasiveness based on their threat to natural communities and native species.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Virginia Invasiveness Rank	REGION		
			Mountain	Piedmont	Coastal
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Tree-of-heaven	High	•	•	•
<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	Garlic Mustard	High	•	•	•
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	Alligator-weed	High			•
<i>Ampelopsis brevipedunculata</i>	Porcelain-berry	High		•	•
<i>Carex kobomugi</i>	Japanese Sand Sedge	High			•
<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Oriental Bittersweet	High	•	•	•
<i>Centaurea stoebe</i> ssp. <i>micranthos</i>	Spotted Knapweed	High	•	•	•
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Canada Thistle	High	•	•	•
<i>Dioscorea polystachya</i>	Cinnamon Vine	High	•	•	•
<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Autumn Olive	High	•	•	•
<i>Euonymus alatus</i>	Winged Euonymus	High	•	•	
<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Lesser Celandine	High		•	•
<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>	Hydrilla	High	•	•	•
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow Flag	High	•	•	•
<i>Lespedeza cuneata</i>	Chinese Lespedeza	High	•	•	•
<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>	Chinese Privet	High	•	•	•
<i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Japanese Honeysuckle	High	•	•	•
<i>Lonicera maackii</i>	Amur Honeysuckle	High	•	•	•
<i>Lonicera morrowii</i>	Morrow's Honeysuckle	High	•	•	
<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Purple Loosestrife	High	•	•	•
<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Japanese Stiltgrass	High	•	•	•
<i>Murdannia keisak</i>	Marsh Dewflower	High	•	•	•
<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	Parrot Feather	High	•	•	•
<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	Eurasian Water-milfoil	High	•	•	•
<i>Persicaria perfoliata</i>	Mile-a-minute	High	•	•	•
<i>Phragmites australis</i> ssp. <i>australis</i>	Common Reed	High	•	•	•
<i>Pueraria montana</i> var. <i>lobata</i>	Kudzu	High	•	•	•
<i>Reynoutria japonica</i>	Japanese Knotweed	High	•	•	•
<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Multiflora Rose	High	•	•	•
<i>Rubus phoenicolasius</i>	Wineberry	High	•	•	•
<i>Sorghum halepense</i>	Johnson Grass	High	•	•	•
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	European Stinging Nettle	High	•	•	•
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway Maple	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Colonial Bent-grass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Akebia quinata</i>	Five-leaf Akebia	Medium		•	•
<i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	Mimosa	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Arthraxon hispidus</i> var. <i>hispidus</i>	Joint Head Grass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese Barberry	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Bull Thistle	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	Wild Teasel	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Egeria densa</i>	Brazilian Waterweed	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Winter Creeper	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Gill-over-the-ground	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy	Medium		•	•

Invasiveness rank is higher for species that:

- Alter ecosystem processes, such as succession, hydrology or fire regime.
- Are capable of invading undisturbed natural communities.
- Cause substantial impacts on rare or vulnerable species or natural communities or high-quality examples of more common communities.
- Are found widely distributed and generally abundant where present.
- Disperse readily to new areas.
- Are difficult to control.

Early detection species

The list includes a subcategory of invasive plants that are considered early detection species. These are species not yet established or, if established, are not yet widespread in Virginia but known to be highly invasive in habitats similar to those found here. If discovered in Virginia, these species need to be quickly mapped, photographed and reported to DCR. The management goal for early detection species is eradication, as preventing the establishment and spread of newly arrived species will save valuable natural and economic resources.

INFORMATION

For more information, or to report early detection species, contact Stewardship Biologist Kevin Heffernan with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation at 804-786-9112 or kevin.heffernan@dcr.virginia.gov

Photo credits:

Tree-of-heaven, Chuck Barger, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org. *Phragmites*, Jil M. Swearingen, USDI National Park Service, Bugwood.org. *Wavyleaf grass*, Kerrie L. Kyde, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Bugwood.org.

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			REGION		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Virginia Invasiveness Rank	Mountain	Piedmont	Coastal
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Common Velvet Grass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Humulus japonicus</i>	Japanese Hops	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Ligustrum obtusifolium</i> var. <i>obtusifolium</i>	Border Privet	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>	Tartarian Honeysuckle	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	Moneywort	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>	Chinese Silvergrass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Najas minor</i>	Brittle Naiad	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	Royal Paulownia	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Persicaria longiseta</i>	Long-bristled Smartweed	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i>	Golden Bamboo	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Poa compressa</i>	Flat-stemmed Bluegrass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough Bluegrass	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	Callery Pear	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Rhodotypos scandens</i>	Jethead	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep sorrel	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Spiraea japonica</i>	Japanese Spiraea	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Stellaria media</i>	Common Chickweed	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Veronica hederifolia</i>	Ivy-leaved Speedwell	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Viburnum dilatatum</i>	Linden arrow-wood	Medium		•	
<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>	Chinese Wisteria	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Commelina communis</i>	Asiatic Dayflower	Low	•	•	•
<i>Elaeagnus pungens</i>	Thorny Olive	Low	•	•	•
<i>Lespedeza bicolor</i>	Shrubby Bushclover	Low	•	•	•
<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter Honeysuckle	Low	•	•	•
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Chinaberry	Low		•	•
<i>Morus alba</i>	White Mulberry	Low	•	•	•
<i>Perilla frutescens</i>	Beefsteak Plant	Low	•	•	•
<i>Phleum pratense</i>	Timothy	Low	•	•	•
<i>Populus alba</i>	Silver Poplar	Low	•	•	•
<i>Rumex crispus</i> ssp. <i>crispus</i>	Curly Dock	Low	•	•	•
<i>Securigera varia</i>	Crown-vetch	Low	•	•	•
<i>Trapa natans</i>	European Water Chestnut	Low			•
<i>Ulmus pumila</i>	Siberian Elm	Low	•	•	
<i>Vinca major</i>	Greater Periwinkle	Low	•	•	•
<i>Vinca minor</i>	Periwinkle	Low	•	•	•
<i>Wisteria floribunda</i>	Japanese Wisteria	Low		•	•
EARLY DETECTION SPECIES - not yet widely established in Virginia					
<i>Aldrovanda vesiculosa</i>	Waterwheel	High			•
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	Water Hyacinth	High			•
<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	Cogon Grass	High			•
<i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i> ssp. <i>hexapetala</i>	Large Flower Primrose Willow	High	•	•	•
<i>Oplismenus hirtellus</i> ssp. <i>undulatifolius</i>	Wavyleaf Grass	High	•	•	
<i>Vitex rotundifolia</i>	Beach Vitex	High			•
<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>	Giant Hogweed	Medium	•	•	
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Water Spinach	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Salvinia molesta</i>	Giant Salvinia	Medium	•	•	•
<i>Solanum viarum</i>	Tropical Soda Apple	Medium		•	•