

NEWS RELEASE

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May is Invasive Plants Month

Third year City is raising awareness of invasive plants and their effects

Summary

May is Invasive Plants Month in the City of Nanaimo. This is the third year the City has held this special month to raise awareness of invasive plants and their effects on our parks.

Like last year, the focus will be on English Ivy and the importance of removing it from trees throughout the community as well a focus will be on removing Scotch Broom. The month-long event will feature Broombusters and English Ivy removal work parties and days where residents can drop off invasive plants they have removed from their property to the Drop Zone at Bowen Park.

Invasive Plants Month kicks off on April 25 where the public is invited to participate in a Broombusters work party at Northfield Park from 10:00 am to noon. Those wishing to participate in this work party and other work parties throughout Invasive Plant Month can register through the City website or by calling 250-756-5200. See page 56 of the Spring and Summer Activity Guide for more information on these work parties.

Strategic Link: Invasive species control falls under Environmental Responsibility, one the four Pillars of Sustainability in the City of Nanaimo's Strategic Plan.

Key Points

- Other events include Broombusters work parties at Nanaimo Ice Centre on May 3 and in Oceanview Park (Laguna Rd) on May 16 and an English Ivy work party in Bowen Park on May 22. See the Invasive Plants Month Poster for more information on registration.
- Residents can drop off invasive plants they have removed from their property at the Wall Street entrance of Bowen Park from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm on May 8 and from 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm on May 31.
- English Ivy spreads out over the forest floor, shading and smothering plants underneath it. In its adult stage ivy wraps itself around trees and can topple them in wind storms due to its heavy weight.
- Invasives are plants that have the potential to impact local ecosystems in a negative way. Plants, such as English Ivy, Scotch Broom and Himalayan Blackberry are well established in Nanaimo while others, such as Knotweed, Daphne and Giant Hogweed are just starting to make their way into the area.

Quotes

"Invasive plants have a negative impact on native plants in this area. Through education and progressive removal of these plants, we can work towards ensuring the rich natural legacy of Nanaimo."

Rob Lawrance
Environmental Planner
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- Improper disposal of garden waste in our parks increases the likelihood of spreading invasive plants. Residents can dispose of garden waste at the regional landfill (1105 Cedar Road) or compost it.
- English Ivy has a juvenile stage where it grows as a vine along the ground and an adult stage where it forms thick woody stems and grows up into trees causing significant environmental damage.
- Brought to BC from Scotland as a garden ornamental, Scotch Broom has become an aggressive and damaging invasive plant.
- Some invasive plants, like Giant Hogweed, are toxic to humans and animals.

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Contact:

Deborah Beck
Recreation Coordinator
City of Nanaimo
deborah.beck@nanaimo.ca
250-756-5203



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