

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **City marks fourth annual Invasive Plant Awareness Month**

*Broom removal highlights the effects of invasive plants on Nanaimo's parks*

#### **Summary**

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

To kick off events, this past Saturday, Councillor Ian Thorpe, City staff, representatives from Broombusters, Departure Bay Neighbourhood Association and Dover Bay Secondary Eco Club along with other community volunteers got to work in Sugarloaf Mountain Park to remove spreading Scotch broom from the park.

The month-long event will feature Broombusters and other invasive plant 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.

Those wishing to participate in any of the work parties throughout Invasive Plant Month can register through the City website or by calling 250-756-5200.

*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**

- Work parties will be held throughout the month of May and are listed on page 106 of the Spring & Summer Activity Guide. Residents can also organize their own events through the Partners in Parks (PIP) program.
- Residents can drop off invasive plants they have removed from their property at the Drop Zone located at the Wall Street entrance of Bowen Park from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on Saturday, April 23 and Saturday, May 28.
- Invasive plants have the potential to negatively impact local ecosystems. Plants, such as English Ivy, Scotch Broom and Himalayan Blackberry are well established in Nanaimo while others, such as Knotweed and Giant Hogweed are expanding in Nanaimo.
- 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.

#### **Quotes**

"We are working on many different strategies to manage invasive plants in our parks. With such great support from stewardship groups and community volunteers, we get a few steps closer to controlling the spread of these plants."

Rob Lawrance  
Environmental Planner  
City of Nanaimo

"Nanaimo is fortunate to have such a rich natural legacy which is something, as a community, we take great pride in. This can be seen by the many volunteers who make such great efforts to remove invasive plants from our parks."

Ian Thorpe  
Councillor  
City of Nanaimo

### Quick Facts

- Brought to BC from Scotland as a garden ornamental, Scotch Broom has become an aggressive and damaging invasive plant. In the areas it spreads to it lowers plant and wildlife diversity and is a potential wildfire hazard.
- Some invasive plants, like Giant Hogweed, are toxic to humans and animals. If its sap gets on the skin it can burn it when exposed to the sunlight.
- 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.

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