

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Invasive Plant Awareness Month

### Summary

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

The month-long event will feature Broombusters and other invasive plant removal work parties, including a BBQ at Pipers Lagoon Friday, May 5th. Residents can drop off invasive plants they have removed from their property to the Drop Zone at Bowen Park on April 23 and May 27 (11am - 3pm).

If you are able to participate in any of the work parties throughout Invasive Plant Month please register through the City website or by calling 250-756-5200.

Thank you for helping us maintain our natural areas and restoring the integrity of our native ecology.

*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 108 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 11:00 am to 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 23 and Saturday, May 27.
- 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 spreading.
- 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), compost it or bring to the two drop zones at Bowen Park, April 23 and May 27 from 11am-3pm.

### 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  
Parks & Open Space Planner  
City of Nanaimo

"Invasive plants are non-native plants that cause economic or environmental harm to our ecosystems by out-competing our native plants for space, nutrients and sunlight. They can lessen the diversity of our ecosystems and destabilize them, increasing further invasion of non-native plants. We need to "Attack Them" before they "Attack Us". May is Invasive Plant Awareness Month. Join us for some of our organized Invasive Plant Work Parties or plan your own Work Party in your neighbourhood to get rid of these Invasive plants."

Deborah Beck  
Recreation Coordinator  
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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