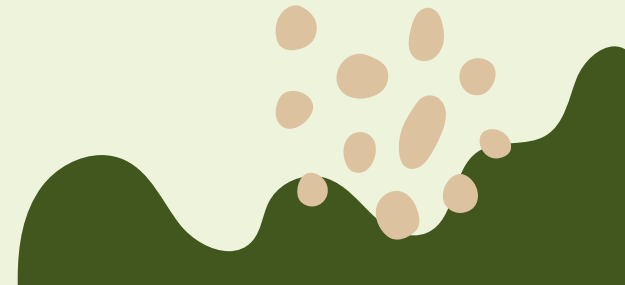


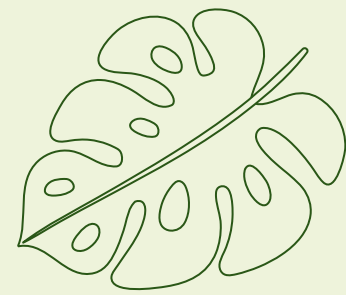


Invaders in Our Backyard

A lesson on Alberta's Invasive Species



Learning Objectives



By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define what an invasive species is in simple terms.
- Identify at least three invasive species found in Alberta
- Explain how invasive species can harm native plants, animals, and ecosystems.
- Describe how humans accidentally or intentionally spread invasive species.
- List three simple actions kids can take to help stop invasive species.

Curriculum Connections:



Grade 1:

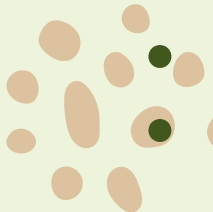
- Science: Living Systems
- Social Studies: Citizenship

Grade 2:

- Science: Living Systems
- Social Studies: Canada's Dynamic Communities

Grade 3:

- Science: Living Systems
- Social Studies: Communities and the World



Curriculum Connections:



Grade 4:

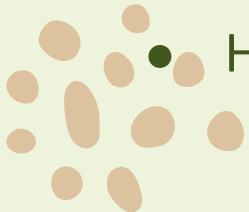
- Science: Living Systems
- Social Studies: Celebrations and Challenges

Grade 5:

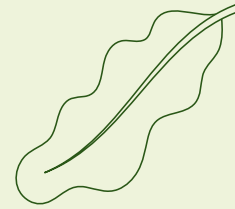
- Social Studies: Time and Place

Grade 6:

- Science: Living Systems
- Health / Environmental & Outdoor Education



Materials



Google slides

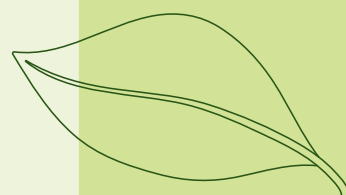
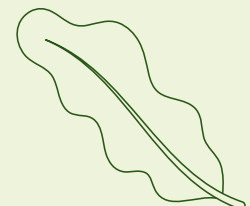
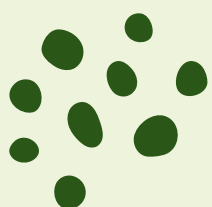
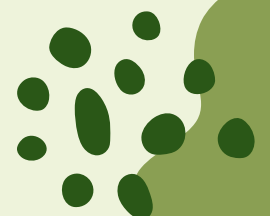
- Link: [here](#)

Activity 1:

- Printed Wanted Poster Template: [here](#)
- Markers, crayons, or coloring pencils

Activity 2:

- Outdoor space for tag game
- Cones (or Resource Comp. Cut Outs: [here](#))



What is an
invasive species?



Watch Invasive Species 101:





What is an invasive species?

A plant or animal that doesn't belong here and causes trouble!

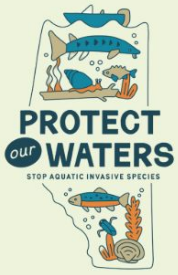
They might:

- Take food and space from native animals
- Spread really fast
- Change our lakes, forests, and fields



Meet some of Alberta's Invaders:





Goldfish



<https://www.learnaboutnature.com/fish/fantail-goldfish/>



Cute in a tank, but bad in a pond! They eat fish eggs and stir up mud.



Meet Tank!

Speaking of goldfish... this is Tank, the Alberta Invasive Species Council's giant walking goldfish!

Tank's job is to remind everyone to keep your goldfish in their tank, don't let them loose!

By keeping pet fish safe at home, we help protect Alberta's lakes and wetlands!





Wild Boar



Wikimedia



Oat field with wild boar damage

One of the most damaging invasive species in North America. They dig up crops and make a mess in forests.



Rats



Rat burrowed under the grain bin.



Norway rat, *Rattus norvegicus*



Roof rat, *Rattus rattus*

Rats are one of the most destructive invasive species in North America! Alberta remains the largest RAT-FREE place in the world.

Invasive Plants - Blueweed



Blueweed Flower CloseUp: Photo credit Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

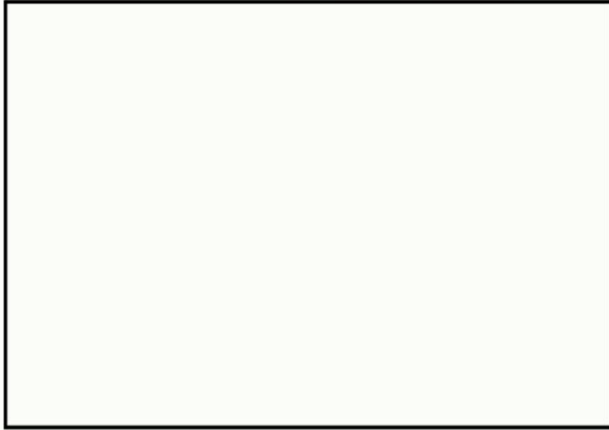


Blueweed Flowers: Photo credit Ansel Oommen, Bugwood.org

A pretty flower that pushes out native plants.

WANTED

--- DEAD OR ALIVE ---



DESCRIPTION -

CRIMES COMMITTED -

HOW TO STOP IT -

LAST SEEN -

--- REWARD ---

Wanted Poster Activity

Draw your own poster for one of these
invaders!



How did they get
here?



How did they get here?

- Ride on cars or boats
- Hitchhike on shoes or pets
- Hide in garden soil
- People release pets into ponds



Can you think of other ways?





June 2023



June 2025

Before vs after himalayan balsam control

Why are they a problem?



Why are they a problem?

- They steal food and space from native animals.
- They crowd out native plants that wildlife need.
- They make lakes and rivers muddy and unhealthy.
- They destroy farms and gardens.
- They cost a lot of money to clean up and control.

Can you think of other ways?



Why are they a problem?



Goldfish, *Carassius auratus*



What can we do to
stop the spread of
invasive species?



We Can Help!

- Don't let pets loose
- Wash your gear and boots
- Plant native flowers
- Tell an adult if you see something strange
- Stay on marked trails

Can you think of other ways?



Resource Competition Game (Cones/Fish Food)

Overview:

This game shows how invasive species can outcompete native species for limited resources by moving faster and eating a wider variety of food.

How to Play:

- Scatter cones (or printed food cutouts) around the play area.
- If using cones, you can pretend each cone is a piece of food.
- If using cutouts, include two types of food (e.g., bugs and fruit).
- Split students up into two teams: Invasive species, and native species
 - Invasive species (e.g., goldfish) – can run and collect all types of food.
 - Native species (e.g., trout) – can only walk and may be limited to certain types of food (e.g., only bugs).
- On the teacher's signal, students collect as many cones/food pieces as possible within 1–2 minutes.
- Compare how much food each group gathered.

Learning Outcome:

Invasive species usually collect more because they move faster and have access to more food types. This models how invasive species outcompete native species for resources in real ecosystems.

Resource Competition Game!



For More Information:

- Goldfish: [here](#)
- Protect Our Waters Campaign: [here](#)
- Wild Boar: [here](#)
- Squeal on Pigs Campaign: [here](#)
- Rats: [here](#)
- Rat on Rats Campaign: [here](#)
- Blueweed: [here](#)
- Grow Me Instead Campaign: [here](#)



Thanks

Do you have any questions?
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