



## Looks Can Be Deceiving

Some invasive plants may be colourful and attractive, but they can quietly cause lasting harm. Unlike invasive animals like wild boar or zebra mussels, invasive plants don't always look alarming at first glance.

A hillside covered in oxeye daisy (a regulated invasive plant) may look beautiful, but it represents:

- Loss of native wildflowers
- Reduced biodiversity
- Altered ecosystem function
- Long-term habitat change

Invasive plants are often described as **"death by a thousand cuts"**, spreading slowly and quietly, replacing diverse native plant communities over time. Alberta's native grasslands, one of the most endangered ecosystems on the planet, are especially vulnerable.



Field of oxeye daisy

## Prevention Starts with You

Everyday actions make a difference:

- Choose native plants for your garden; see the Alberta Native Plant Council's website for suppliers
- Clean boots, gear, and equipment to remove invasive plant seeds
- Use weed-free soil and materials when available
- Learn to identify invasive plants
- Report new sightings using EDDMapS

## Buyer Beware:

Good intentions can still cause harm. Many commercial "wildflower" seed mixes:

- Contain non-native species
- May include invasive plants
- Often do not list scientific names
- Are designed for appearance, not ecological function

Avoid generic "wildflower" seed mixes. Instead, choose seed that clearly lists species names, is native to Alberta, and comes from trusted native plant suppliers.

ALBERTA  
Invasive  
Species  
COUNCIL



# Wildflowers not weeds



[www.abinvasives.ca](http://www.abinvasives.ca)



## What's The Difference?

**WILDFLOWER** - A native flowering plant that evolved as part of Alberta's healthy ecosystems, alongside pollinators, birds, and wildlife.



Field of wildflowers with common harebell in front

### **INVASIVE PLANTS (WEEDS) -**

Non-native plants that spread aggressively without natural controls, outcompete native species, and cause ecological or economic harm. In Alberta, invasive species contribute to over \$2 billion in annual losses. Not all non-native plants become invasive.

### **REGULATED INVASIVE PLANTS -**

Invasive plants that are listed under legislation such as Alberta's Weed Control Act, which classifies species as either Prohibited Noxious (must be destroyed) or Noxious (must be controlled). Not all invasive plants are regulated, and deregulated species may still be invasive.



**PURPOSE PLANTED ESCAPEES** - Some non-native plants are intentionally planted for forage, landscaping, or reclamation, but can spread into natural areas and become invasive. Examples include smooth brome, cicer milkvetch, and Russian olive, which may be useful where planted but harmful once they escape.



Creeping bellflower is an invasive plant

**THEY DON'T STAY PUT!** Invasive plants don't stay where they're planted. They can spread from yards and fields into natural areas. Once established, they are difficult and costly to control or remove.

Knowing the difference between wildflowers and weeds helps protect Alberta's landscapes and biodiversity, today and for the future.

## Why Native Wildflowers Matter

Alberta is home to over 2,100 native plant species, including hundreds of wildflowers found across grasslands, forests, badlands, wetlands, and alpine meadows. These plants form the foundation of healthy ecosystems.

**Native wildflowers don't just add beauty**, they support biodiversity, improve soil health, and help landscapes withstand drought, pests, and disturbance.



Small mason bee on bee balm

## Native Plants Matter For Native Pollinators

Alberta is home to more than 370 native bee species. Many evolved alongside specific native plants and depend on them for pollen and nectar. While some invasive weeds provide limited resources, they cannot support the diversity and nutrition of native plant communities.

