INVASIVE SPECIES

(2003, R2018)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes invasive species adversely affect the integrity of ecosystems and cause both environmental degradation and economic harm. Invasive species, whether they are plants, animals, fungi, or insects may cause deterioration of native habitats and plant communities as well as damage to designed and managed ecosystems. Because invasives reduce biodiversity and disrupt the healthy structure and function of both native and human ecosystems, landscape architects should not introduce or support the use of known invasive species and, where already existing, should take steps to eradicate them.

Rationale

Some species when introduced to new locations without native range control factors (such as seasonal weather, diseases, or natural predators) multiply and reproduce and may outcompete and displace native plants. This will reduce biodiversity, adversely affect wildlife, and alter natural processes.

Communities, including state and local governments, must be proactive in developing and funding long-term maintenance and management programs to control and remove invasive plants from land and water.

Species are often introduced (either purposefully or accidentally) to areas outside their native range. Only small fractions of these actually become invasive. These species will naturalize, potentially spreading their range, and may disrupt the natural balance of local ecosystems. Environmental factors including climate change may either slow or speed this process.

Invasive plant species spread by seed dispersal (wind, water, and wildlife), roots, rhizomes, and human involvement.

ASLA recommends the following to control and eliminate invasive species:

1. Increase awareness of local, regional, and national invasive species and current measures to control them.
2. Collaborate among landscape architects, ecologists, horticulturists, nurseries, botanic gardens, public agencies, and conservation organizations to identify invasive and potentially invasive species, and develop management plans to mitigate and eradicate them.
3. Do not specify invasive species on any projects.
4. Specify noninvasive species or native species that are aesthetically and horticulturally suitable alternatives to invasive species.

5. Encourage nurseries, suppliers, and others in the plant propagation industry to grow and provide only noninvasive plants.
6. Implement plans for the control and eradication of invasive plants on project sites.
7. Collaborate with local experts and agencies to develop and revise local landscape ordinances to stop the use and spread of invasive species.
8. Encourage elected officials and public agencies to fund research and budget for the control and removal of existing invasive species that threaten parks, open space, woodlands, and wetland ecosystems.
9. Establish environmental programs that educates citizens about the associated environmental, health, and financial impacts of invasive plants.

The following United States Department of Agriculture website is a resource for state-by-state information on invasive species: www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/index.shtml.