



CABI and invasive species

CABI is working to improve the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest people by making best use of its innovative research and information skills





Our expertise in gathering information and making it widely available gives everyone who works with us a major advantage



CABI Invasive Species

CABI is working to improve the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest people by making best use of its innovative research and information skills. These are applied through a network of in-country centres and partners built up over the last 100 years. To ensure that our work has maximum impact, we're focusing on three globally important issues: Commodities, Knowledge for Development and Invasive Species.

Invasive species – a trillion dollar problem

Some plants, animals and micro-organisms spread unchecked outside their natural environment – killing off native plants and animals and threatening people's food security, health and economic development. CABI's 150 invasive species researchers are therefore working in nearly 70 countries worldwide to overcome and avoid such problems.

Just how important is this work? Well if you consider that invasive species already cause around 1 trillion US dollars worth of damage each year globally, you'll begin to get some idea of just how many people benefit from our efforts.

A growing threat

We are already preparing for the fact that the problems caused by invasive species are going to become more common as global trade, travel and transport increase. Global warming is also going to make things worse: as regions warm they will become much more vulnerable to invaders from warmer climates.

Right now, invasive species are already a problem in almost every country and every type of ecosystem. Dutch elm disease, for example, has decimated elm trees throughout Europe and America after being accidentally introduced from Asia. Likewise, the maize grey leaf spot fungus is now a major menace to poor farmers' food supplies in East Africa. The threats that both rich and poor countries face range from plants introduced as garden ornamentals, to pests and diseases transferred in grain shipments or carried from one country to another on planes, trucks and other vehicles.

How are we combating invasive species?

CABI tackles the incredibly complex problem of invasive species at all levels. Our work ranges from helping to produce international conventions and guidelines that aim to prevent species crossing borders, to improving national quarantine efforts and working with

local farmers to identify and control pests and diseases. In fact, CABI is rapidly becoming the first point of enquiry for anyone facing invasive pest problems.

Managing information for faster and better responses

Our expertise in gathering information and making it widely available gives everyone who works with us a major advantage. As well as helping to identify species causing problems in new areas, for example, we can search our large invasive species database to identify whether similar problems have occurred in other areas – and what management solutions have been effective.

Bio-control: effective and sustainable

CABI researchers are also working hard to find affordable long-term solutions to invasive pest problems. A good example is our work on water hyacinth, an aggressive fast-growing plant that is causing problems throughout North America, Asia, Australia and Africa.

Growing at up to two and a half centimetres per day, water hyacinth rapidly chokes waterways and ruins the lives of those who depend upon them. Huge masses of vegetation stop fisherfolk launching their boats, kill waterborne trade, and even clog up the rotor blades of water-driven power stations. In Africa, they also harbour the snails that carry bilharzia and provide a perfect hiding place for crocodiles – making it dangerous for people to collect water or wash their clothes.

CABI is therefore using water-hyacinth-eating weevils as a long-lasting and relatively inexpensive solution. Breeding and releasing weevils has already cleared large areas of water in Africa, benefiting the many people who depend on them for their livelihoods.

Work with us

Whether you're faced with managing an established invasive species or need to find ways of preventing pests and diseases spreading, we are keen to work with you. For more information, please contact XXXX.

www.cabi.org

KNOWLEDGE FOR LIFE