



Weeds Won't Wait: Don't Hesitate

**For Immediate Release
February 20, 2008**

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**THE 9TH ANNUAL NATIONAL INVASIVE WEED AWARENESS WEEK (NIWAW)
REMINDS US TO SPREAD THE WORD, NOT THE WEEDS**

Held February 24 – 29, 2008, at the Four Points by Sheraton, Washington, D.C.

(LAWRENCE, Kan.) — Nearly 200 scientists and invasive plant management stakeholders from industry associations, professional societies, government agencies and private organizations all over North America will gather in our nation's capital to raise awareness about the severe economic and environmental impacts caused by invasive plants during the 9th Annual National Invasive Weed Awareness Week, February 24 - 29.

This special awareness week, hosted by the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, will continue a national conversation about the destructive effects of invasive weeds. The impact of invasive weeds on the nation's agriculture, water quality, wildlife and recreation already costs the U.S. an estimated \$34.7 billion annually, according to a recent Cornell University report.

The Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition is a broad-based coalition dedicated to increasing both government and public awareness of the issues surrounding invasive weeds. The Weed Science Society of America fully supports the Coalition's efforts and takes an active role in NIWAW events.

"NIWAW is an opportunity for participants to learn from each other, as well as to share successes, challenges and opportunities with legislators and public policy makers," says Nelroy Jackson, Chair of the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition. "Everyone has an important role in slowing the spread of invasive plants."

During the course of the week, attendees will hear from and participate in round table discussion groups with many of the partners in the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW), including the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Departments of Interior and Transportation, as well as the National Invasive Species Council. On Wednesday afternoon, Lee Van Wychen, Director of Science Policy for the National and Regional Weed Science Societies, will moderate a roundtable discussion for non-governmental organizations themed, "What it Takes to Deliver a Compelling Message to Congress." Organizations represented on this panel include the Ecological Society of America, Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, Wildlife Forever, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, National Governors' Association and the Weed Science Society of America.

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9th ANNUAL NATIONAL INVASIVE WEED AWARENESS COALITION / ADD ONE

“NIWAW is an impressive coalition of individuals and groups working to raise awareness of invasive plants,” says John Kennedy, Chair of the Invasive Species Committee for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “We are committed to working with the Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition because their mission is consistent with our priorities. We need to have an effective national invasive plant management plan in place.”

A special Children’s Fun Day also is planned for Sunday, February 24, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., at the U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory to provide public education and outreach. There will be plenty of engaging, hands-on activities for children and families to help them learn more about invasive weeds. Exhibits and posters also will be on display at the U.S. Botanic Garden from Monday through Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information about NIWAW 9, please contact Nelroy Jackson, Chair, Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, at (951) 279-7787 or Lee Van Wychen, Director of Science Policy, National and Regional Weed Science Societies, at (202) 746-4686.

2008 NIWAW “Poster Weeds”

Beach vitex (*Vites rotundifolia*)

Originally imported for beach stabilization, this invasive crowds out native species and alters sea turtle nesting areas.

Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)

This aquatic fern, found in the gulf region, can double its surface area every five to seven days. It blocks sunlight from other aquatic vegetation and depletes oxygen in the water, killing fish.

Yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis* L.)

This extremely aggressive annual depletes soil moisture, displaces native plants and is poisonous to horses. It is found primarily in the western coastal states, but is moving east.

Cheatgrass, downy brome (*Bromus tectorum* L.)

This aggressive western annual quickly matures and dries up, increasing frequency and intensity of rangeland fires.

Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia* L.)

Found in the central and western states, this invasive shrub or tree is shade tolerant and thrives in a variety of soil conditions.

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About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a non-profit professional society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Weed Science Society of America, promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds; provides science-based information to the public and policy makers; and fosters awareness of weeds and their impacts on managed and natural ecosystems. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.