

A GROWING NETWORK: REGIONAL INVASIVE PLANT INITIATIVES IN NEW ENGLAND

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The invasive plant problem is complex and solutions require people from many disciplines. Collaborative invasive plant initiatives are underway in New England and opportunities abound to become involved. Individuals from diverse professions and avocations have joined the New England Invasive Plant Group (NIPGro) that provides conferences, newsletters, email news briefs, and an information clearinghouse to inform members and foster networking. The next conference is planned for Sept. 16-18, 2005. Four hundred and fifty volunteers are trained by the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England (IPANE) to identify and collect data on species known or suspected to be invasive in the region. Data collected is verified and made available online in map or data format, along with a wealth of additional information and photos. More training sessions will be held this spring. NIPGro and IPANE staff are working to facilitate an Early Detection and Rapid Response network that will enable New Englanders to detect, assess and preempt the establishment of new invaders. State invasive plant committees, federal agencies, and another regional organization, the Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force provide advice and links to a larger audience. A grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture currently funds NIPGro and IPANE. The primary organizers are the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the University of Connecticut, and the New England Wild Flower Society. More information can be found on the IPANE website (www.ipane.org).