



# Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

## CONTROL INVASIVE SPECIES

### Position Statement

Adopted May 10, 2012

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**Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to preventing invasive species from impacting our health, ecology and economy; and to restoring infested terrestrial and aquatic environments to a more natural state.**

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Most non-native species are not harmful, and many are highly beneficial. The small percentage of non-native species (plant, animal, insect, algae, parasite or pathogen) that have escaped cultivation or domestication, become established, and cause harm are collectively known as *invasive* species. Invasive species usually have attributes that facilitate their survival, such as abundant seed or gamete production, rapid growth rates, no natural predators, tolerances to abiotic factors found in the new environment and allelopathic chemicals or a prowess, against which native species have no defense. Florida is a haven for hundreds of invasive species that negatively impact our ecology, economy and public health.

Invasive species pose a serious threat to ecological integrity by reducing biodiversity and degrading habitat and forage. In many of our natural areas, introduced species have taken over, crowded out or killed indigenous species, and in some cases caused the extinction of native species. Invasive species also have a profound impact on vital sectors of the economy in Florida. Agricultural, forestry and fishery yields are significantly reduced by noxious alien microbes, parasites, pests and weeds. Without constant expenditure for maintenance and control, invasive species would have severe adverse impacts on our natural water resources and recreational activities, such as fishing, boating, snorkeling, swimming, and wildlife viewing on which our tourism-based economy depends. Invasive species are responsible for innumerable public health challenges. Pathogens and parasites may themselves be invasive species or may be transmitted by them causing outbreaks of infectious disease.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. recognizes that native Florida plant and animal species, and the ecosystems on which they—and—we depend, are too important to sacrifice to exotic invaders. We support the eradication or control of invasive species in Florida and the restoration of infested environments to a more natural state. To achieve this goal, we endorse the following:

### **To Prevent New Introductions**

- Maintain a leadership role in coordinating and planning worldwide invasive species programs and reaching out to international, national, state, tribal, local and private partners on invasive species issues
- Establish international, federal and state policies to more effectively manage commercial and other pathways to reduce the transport and release of potentially harmful species
- Apply a risk assessment analysis to every species proposed for importation into the country to screen for potential environmental, economic and health impacts
- Prevent infestations with surveillance or “early detection” programs to look for new introductions or pioneer invasions of invasive species that have potential for significant detrimental impact

### **To Manage Invasions and Restore Infested Ecosystems**

- Coordinate international, federal, state and local efforts to provide a more rapid response to prevent infestation, spread of plant or wildlife disease and aquatic invasion
- Support promulgation of Florida-based research results regarding performance results, maintenance costs, limitations, unanticipated consequences and net cost effectiveness of management practices, activities and programs currently implemented in Florida
- Evaluate goals, standards, and strategies regularly to incorporate the most recent scientific information and analyses and to allow for adaptive management techniques and strategies
- Provide on-going funding, incentives and technical assistance for slowing the spread of established invasive species on public and private lands, in cooperation with state and tribal governing bodies
- Re-establish native species to reduce the likelihood of exotic species reinvasion following removal of nonnative species
- Increase funding for eradication and control efforts and the purchase of lands to be managed for conservation of native fauna and flora
- Educate landowners, land managers and landscape professionals to the advantages of planting or landscaping with indigenous plants

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**Charter Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.**

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