

A dense field of Black Knapweed plants with numerous purple flower heads on green stems.

Update on the Regional Invasive Species Program

Environmental Services Committee
February 18, 2026

Black Knapweed



Background

- Invasive species are a top stressor that impacts the natural environment & biodiversity.
- Pose environmental, economic and public health threats - expected to increase with climate change
- Since 2017, the CRD has supported coordination of invasive species management through the Regional Invasive Species Program
- Staffed by half-time coordinator with an annual budget of ~\$130,000
- Program focuses on high priority **invasive plants** in the region e.g. knotweed, giant hogweed, black knapweed & others

Giant Hogweed



Blessed Milk Thistle

Program Overview

Mandate: Reduce the impacts that invasive species have on the region's environment, economy and health.

Focus Areas:

1. Collaboration
2. Capacity building & staff training
3. Education & outreach
4. Early Detection Rapid Response
5. Disposal
6. Restoration & research

Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP)

- CRD chaired & coordinated, intergovernmental working group with ~60 members from municipalities, First Nations, & other agencies
- Facilitates regional coordination, collaborative action and information sharing, key partners
- Staff also work closely with:
 - BC Ministry of Forests - Invasive Plant Program
 - Invasive Species Council of BC
 - National & international partners, researchers
 - Coastal Invasive Plant Committee

Carpet Burweed Workshop – Uplands Park

Capital Region Invasive Plant List

Capital Region Invasive Plant List

How to use this list: This list identifies the invasive alien plant species of concern in the capital region. All species on the list are considered a priority for management depending on context. Species have been placed in categories based on such factors as known distribution, values or assets threatened, management objectives and management viability. Each category has a different management approach and objective, and a unique colour. Icons are used to show key values and assets that each species threatens.

The four categories and their management objectives, criteria, considerations, and processes are as follows:

PREVENT (PR) — Prevent introduction and establishment in the capital region	
Definition	Species not yet known to occur in the capital region but likely to establish if introduced.
Considerations	May occur in nearby regions and/or on their Prevent or “Watch” lists.
Process	Monitor and consult with provincial Inter-ministry Invasive Species Working Group (IMISWG) and nearby jurisdictions. If a species is discovered in a single location or very isolated locations in the capital region that is not on any other Prevent or Eradicate lists, send information to IMISWG for direction. For species not known to occur in the capital region or adjacent jurisdictions, rely on input from subject matter experts and IMISWG.
ERADICATE (ER) — Eradicate from the capital region	
Definition	Species occurs in the capital region with few known infestations of limited extent.
Considerations	Is eradication feasible with available resources?
Process	Actively seek all occurrences in the region and respond quickly to eradicate them.
CONTAIN (CN) — Eradicate infestations outside containment areas and strategic control within.	
Definition	Species infestations exceed the resource capacity to eradicate from the capital region but preventing infestation expansion is possible.
Considerations	Regional eradication is not feasible due to extent and/or location of <u>populations</u> but populations can be contained. Infestations targeted for containment should be discrete such that a containment line can be drawn around it.
Process	Consider known occurrences, map them and draw containment (isolation) polygon around them, and eradicate any plants that occur outside the polygon.

- Key resource for local land managers & the public in managing invasive species
- 152 species, 58 plants added since the 2019 version
- 4 classification categories
 - Prevent
 - Eradicate
 - Contain
 - Strategic control



Yellow Toadflax

Program Accomplishments

- Updated regional priority invasive species list
- With partners, coordinated & supported regional management of high priority species (e.g. knotweed, poison hemlock, black knapweed)
- Coordinated the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) meetings and hosted capacity workshops
- Collaborated with T'Sou-ke Nation & Dist. of Sooke to secure provincial permit to manage knotweed in the Sooke River
- Hosted demo of the Burn Boss (mobile incineration unit for invasive species disposal)





Butterbur/Fuki

Invasive Species Regulatory Framework

- Overlapping jurisdictions on invasives leads to complexity and challenges
- Current provincial legislation is outdated
- Many invasive plant are sold and traded in BC; this increases pressure on local govts to manage impacts
- New report on economic impacts of invasives in BC expected in 2026 (Invasive Species Council of BC)

The April 2026 staff report will recommend CRD Board advocacy to the BC government on new invasive species legislation



Questions?

Thank you



Capital Regional District



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