

Knox County Invasive Species Ordinance



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Knox County
Cooperative Invasive
Species Management Area



Background on Regulating Invasive Plants in IN

- Indiana Invasive Species Council – established in 2010 by the state “to enhance the ability of government agencies to detect, prevent, monitor, and manage new and long established invasions, as well as increase public awareness about invasive species.”
 - Subgroups – Plants, Plant Pests & Diseases, Animals, Animal Diseases, and Aquatic Invasives
 - Two advisory committees created – Invasive Plants and Invasive Aquatics
- Invasive Plant Advisory Committee (IPAC) – created in August 2010 to address invasive plant species and support the IISC



IPAC - Ranking Invasive Plants

- Plants are ranked using a standardized form and scientific evidence.
- Two different forms
 - Plants in trade and not
- Different rankings
 - High, Medium, Low, and Caution
- IPAC members assess plants and have assessments double-checked by experts.
- First list approved by IISC on 10/11/13
- Updates and new species being assessed currently



High



Medium



Low



Caution

Terrestrial Plant Rule (TPR)

- Official Indiana Invasive Plant List was supposed to lead to a DNR rule prohibiting detrimental invasive plants.
 - IISC asked DNR to remove the invasive plants rated “high” in 2013
- DNR Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology drafted rule in mid 2014
 - On hold for a long time
- Knox County wanted to do something about invasive plants beforehand.
 - This led to the Knox County Invasive Species Ordinance (KCISO).
- TPR was passed in April 2019 (prohibits 44 of the 46 invasive plants rated high starting in April 2020)
 - Callery Pear and Norway Maple left off the list

Backstory to KCISO

- Knox County has been a leader in invasive plant awareness
 - Knox County SWCD funded my position
 - County leaders support invasive species initiatives
- The Knox County SWCD business plan included updating city landscaping ordinance to restrict use of invasive species.
 - Formed a committee to look at drafting this ordinance
 - Committee included city officials, county officials, horticulture professionals, Purdue ext., and naturalists



Committee Outcomes

- Drafted an updated city landscape ordinance
 - Borrowed features from Bloomington, Lafayette, and other Indiana cities
 - Restricts the use of invasive plants in new landscaping projects
 - Passed by the Vincennes City Council on July 9, 2018
- Some committee members thought this wasn't enough and should also have a ban on sales of plants throughout the county
 - Led to working on the KCISO

KCISO Process

- Discussed which plants to include
 - Wanted to include medium species because of their impact around the county
- Drafted ordinance with help of county attorney
- Discussed with County Commissioners and SWCD Board
 - Decided to not regulate seeds at the time, just established plants (seedlings, liners, potted plants, shrubs, and trees)
 - Removed Korean Lespedeza and Tall Fescue from the list because of conservation planting uses
 - Commissioners very supportive of ordinance in general
- Ordinance passed after 3 readings and responding to 1 complaint
 - Passed on August 7, 2018

Knox County Invasive Species Ordinance

- Prohibits the sale of 64 invasive plant species starting on January 1, 2020
 - Species rated medium and high on the official Indiana Invasive Plant List (except for Korean Lespedeza and Tall Fescue)
- Includes species not in state rule
 - Burning Bush, Callery Pear, Norway Maple, etc.
- Enforcing authority is the Natural Resource Specialist with the SWCD or other person designated by the County Commissioners
- Hearing authority is a newly formed, five member Knox County Invasive Species Board (KCISB)
 - Has at least one agricultural and one horticultural professional at all times



Penalties

- First violation: up to \$2,500
- Second and subsequent violations: up to \$7,500
- Violations can apply per plant or per location



KCISO Progress

- Notified landscapers and nurseries of the ordinance
- Working with the companies to make sure they'll be able to comply at the beginning of 2020
- Figuring out how our ordinance will fit with the state rule
 - Probably will end up only enforcing the species that differ from the state rule after April 18, 2020
 - Our ordinance encompasses all of the TPR species plus 20 more



Major Invasive Plant Species Sold in Knox County

- Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*)
- Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)
- Chinese Maiden Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
- English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)
- Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)
- Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
- Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
- Privets (*Ligustrum* spp.)
- Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)



Challenges

- Landscape ordinance still having difficulty being followed
- Had one landscaper complain, and some companies wondering if they could still sell the invasive plants outside of the county.
- Big box stores do not control their inventory at a local levels.
- Public concerned that they would be fined for having plants on their property.

Questions?

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More information about the KCISO at:

<http://knoxcountyswcd.com/kccisma/knox-county-invasive-plant-ordinance/>

For more information about Knox County CISMA, check out our website & Facebook pages:

- Website: <http://knoxcountyswcd.com/kccisma/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/knoxcountycisma>