

Keeping Yukon Natural

Recommendations for Gardeners



Large infestations of the common tansy displace native vegetation and may be toxic to grazing animals. Photo: Andrea Altherr

What's the problem?

Invasive species are non-native species that have the potential to cause undesirable or detrimental impacts on people, animals, or the ecosystem. These species often reproduce quickly and are very persistent. Most non-native species introduced into the Yukon will not become invasive due to their inability to adapt to the cold climate and poor soil nutrient conditions. However, invasive species that do become established often excel in these conditions due to their ability to outcompete boreal species. Changing climatic conditions in the North such as warmer winters and wetter summers may further increase the extent and rate of spread of invasive species.

Some non-native garden ornamentals introduced to Yukon become a problem when they escape out of the garden and into nearby greenbelts and forested areas. Many garden ornamentals that have been

introduced in Yukon arrive without the insects and diseases that keep them under check in their place of origin. Without biological controls these plants may spread vigorously and push out native species, leading to a reduction in biodiversity. Invasive species can also have a negative effect when they form large monocultures and are unpalatable to wildlife. Displacing native species through introduction of invasive species has the potential to harm native pollinators. Many boreal pollinators have evolved symbiotic lifecycle relationships with specific native species and rely on one another to complete their lifecycles.

Best practices for gardeners

- Download a copy of the Yukon *Grow Me Instead* booklet for a list of non-aggressive growing plants for your garden.

Yukon contains many areas of natural wilderness, and by caring and doing our part, the ecological integrity of the territory can be maintained.

- Know what you grow!
- Watch your garden carefully for unwanted plants. Detecting and removing plants when they first emerge can limit their persistence and spread. Simple hand pulling may be an effective method for removal. Covering perennial or grass species with mulch or heavy plastic will help to deplete energy stored in roots and prevent germination the following year.
- Consider growing native plants! Native species can be a beautiful addition to your front yard. They are low maintenance and don't require large amounts of water, amended soil, or fertilizer to thrive. See the [Grow Me Instead](#) brochure for how to collect seeds.
- Dispose of invasive plants and soil responsibly. Don't throw unwanted plants or soil onto greenbelts. This is a perfect opportunity for colonies to become established in forests.
- Avoid composting invasive species. Many seeds are not destroyed by heat and are capable of germinating elsewhere when the compost is spread.
- Invasive plants should be disposed of at the landfill.
- Avoid transplanting southern species unless you know they are not invasive.
- Early detection is a critical step to stopping the spread of invasive plants. If you notice a plant that spreads aggressively, report it to the Yukon Invasive Species Council.

Choose your garden plants carefully. Once established, invasive species are very difficult to remove.



Before buying seed mixes, read labels to determine if invasive species are present. Use wildflower seed mixes with caution.

Two examples of invasive species to look for in your garden

Common tansy

Tanacetum vulgare

Common tansy is a perennial plant with yellow button-like flowers. Tansy is commonly used as a hardy garden plant. Infestations have been encountered along roadways, streambanks, and pastures and many other sunny, well-drained locations. Tansy has the ability to quickly become invasive due to its high seed production and long-term seed viability; seeds can persist in the soil for up to 25 years. To eradicate common tansy, focus on controlling the spread of seeds by mowing the plant once yearly before seed production begins in July. Tansy can be pulled by hand when the plants are small, however gloves should be worn to limit skin irritations. Repeated management over several years will be needed.

Butter and eggs has been found in most Yukon communities, primarily from intentional garden plantings. Photo: Andrea Altherr



Butter and eggs, toadflax

Linaria vulgaris

Butter and eggs is a showy, perennial garden plant that has been aggressively spreading into areas such as roadsides and disturbed gravel paths. This plant has attractive and distinct yellow and off-white flowers which bloom in early to mid-summer. It often forms colonies in lawns and disturbed areas from its creeping root system which produces new shoots. Butter and eggs is mildly toxic to wildlife and is highly competitive for soil moisture. Hand pulling can be effective when the plant is in seedling stage before the root system develops.

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Report invasive species to info@yukoninvasives.com OR use the reporting form at www.yukoninvasive.com OR submit your observation to www.iNaturalist.org

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