

Invasive Species: Revisited

*Lecture and Walking Tour
Project Proposal and Outline*

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Zack Rouda of Rewild Maine will deliver a short lecture presenting an overview of invasive species of plants and animals (with focus on the history of plant spread and present solutions for management/removal), lead a discussion, and a guided walk to visit invasive plant species in the wild.

OUTLINE OF LECTURE

1. Examine the definitions of “Invasive species” -
 - a. USDA says “non-native under consideration; causes economic or environmental harm”
 - i. Native to where, native to when? Many plants moved around the continent due to climate change, farming and etc., also many plants moved around the world before European globalization
 - ii. Interesting that economic harm is primarily more important than environmental harm; if these plants could be used for economic gain, would they be non-invasive? Can we reduce environmental harm without causing further harm using herbicidal chemicals?
 - b. My definition - Invasive species are plants that have been moved around as a result of European globalization, prolifically outcompete local species, and are not loved by humans (like *Rosa rugosa*)
2. How plants move
 - a. Natural spread - Swallow carrying coconut
 - i. Hurricanes, tornadoes
 - b. Colonial forces
 - i. Accidental (zebra mussels on boats)
 - ii. Ornamentals (bittersweet, knotweed, barberry)
 - iii. Planted to control erosion (kudzu, honeysuckle)
 - iv. Control other species (cane toad to eat the cane beetle)

3. Are they really that bad?
 - a. Food for animals pollinators (knotweed, honeysuckle)
 - b. Good erosion control (knotweed, kudzu)
 - c. Soil fixers
4. How we currently deal with invasive species
 - a. Chemical herbicides - bad
 - i. Highly conflicting information regarding toxicity - probably all toxic
 - ii. Huge industry (\$15 billion)
 - b. Cutting and sometimes planting native plants
 - i. When we just mow stuff and don't plant natives, it's arguably worse
 - ii. Ignoring it and letting it go is also not good
5. What we can do differently
 - a. Permaculture - planting way more native plants
 - i. Don't just remove the invasive species - plant lots of native stuff!
 - b. Get people involved
 - i. Use invasives for basketry, foraging food and medicine, furniture
 - ii. Invasive species eating festivals (Oregon, Wisconsin)
 - c. Monetize it - make businesses
 - i. High-end restaurants (green crabs in Maine)
 - ii. Herbal medicine - knotweed more effective than antibiotics for fighting Lyme disease
 - iii. Craftspeople
6. How to get involved
 - a. Rewild Maine
 - b. Wild Seed Project
 - c. Will Bonsall, Scatterseed
7. Discussion, Questions

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide an introduction and overview to the concept of invasive species.
2. Challenge students' preconceived notions about invasive species.
3. Remind everyone that chemical herbicides that fuel giant economies will probably never be a safe and reliable solution for everyday people.
4. Suggest some positive alternatives, provide examples of functional art and tasty snacks made from invasive plant species, and inspire creative solutions for the future.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Room with one table for me to put my flip chart on and another table for me to display baskets and snacks
2. Chairs for people to sit in

COST OF PROGRAM

\$200 (or more! Donations are always appreciated) check made out to Rewild Maine