

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the "White List"?

A: Proposed government policy which will ban the possession, import, movement and cultivation of an estimated 99.75% of the Earth's species of plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms.

Q: What is the Bill number so I can mention it when I write to my legislators?

A: There is no legislation or Bill on the table yet. The Executive Order mandates the Invasive Species Council to "look into" the problem and recommend future policies. The ISC is scheduled to give its recommendations to President Clinton in August 2000.

Q: Who is behind the White List?

A: Monsanto, DowElanco, American Cyanamid, Zeneca, Dow AgroSciences, SePro, Helena and other herbicide manufactures and "life patent" corporations have funded tremendous propaganda in recent years hyping a spurious "invasive species" threat to natural ecosystems in order to sell more herbicides. The USDA, when faced with large budget cuts in the mid 1990s, and needing new justification for its regulatory bureaucracy (protecting the nation from "foreign invaders"), joined in this propaganda effort. Other bureaucracies have joined and the National Invasive Species Council has been created. Park managers nationwide have found "weed extermination" projects a fertile source of funding (The Natural Areas Association for park and preserve managers has a Monsanto employee on its board of directors), and academic biologists likewise have found that promoting the "invasive species threat" useful in their search for grant funding. Unfortunately, this industry-backed media sensationalism has been effective, and many otherwise fine environmental organizations have been misled into support of this "nature cleansing". Monsanto has also been instrumental in the formation of the Exotic Pest Plant Councils - pseudo-environmental front-groups promoting weed hysteria. The California Exotic Pest Plant Council for years had a Monsanto employee on its board of directors, and has received major funding from them and other herbicide manufacturers.

When Monsanto tells you they "want to help the environment", do you believe

them?

Q: Who will be affected?

A: Everyone. There will be a tremendous increase in the toxics load of the land, water, air and food supply from the indiscriminate herbicide and pesticide use favored in extermination campaigns. The release of genetically-engineered bio-control organisms has also been promoted. All national, state and county parks and open space will be targeted by the National Weed Strategy, as will lakes, streams, private lands, wildlife refuges and Indian Reservations - there are no exceptions. Wherever unapproved species exist, control and extermination will be mandatory.

Everyone will lose access to the benefits of new crops - food, fiber, spices, medicinal plants, etc. New crops research is an important part of feeding the world's expanding population. New discoveries of medicinal plants are made almost daily - new medicines and herbs derived from these plants are useful against many modern diseases, from coronary disease to diabetes and AIDS, yet these plants will be prohibited entry. Even processed herbal products will have to be irradiated to kill stray seeds and microorganisms. For example, Echinacea has already been banned by New Zealand as a possible weed. Small family farmers who are diversifying will be prevented from experimenting with new, high-value crops. "The greatest service a man may do for his country, is the introduction of a useful plant." -Thomas Jefferson.

Grass-roots seed-saving organizations, conservationists propagating rare plants or butterflies, ecological restorationists, native plant enthusiasts & landscape designers, permaculturalists, taxonomists and biological researchers of all kinds will find their hands tied, as all living materials will require expensive 'risk assessment' and approval by bureaucrats. Gardeners will be prohibited the majority of the world's plants, and ethnic vegetables, herbs and spices will be banned, denying people their cultural heritage. Chufa, a traditional Native American Indian food is already banned in many states. Chinese Water Spinach, Indian Kodra Millet, and the traditional Iranian wedding incense are all already banned.

Family farms and other smallholders who are found with any one of millions of prohibited species on their land will find themselves fined, herbicided and sprayed, and billed for the costs of extermination.

Q: But aren't alien invasive species a real threat? What about Eucalyptus, Star Thistle, Scotch Broom and wild boars? Don't they destroy native ecosystems?

A: No! This is herbicide industry propaganda. These species are symptoms of man's destructive abuse of the land, not the cause, expanding into heavily

disturbed, overgrazed, polluted areas, often helping heal the land, and filling niches in the ecosystem opened by man's destruction of natives. Star thistle & Scotch Broom are heavily used by native herbivores and pollinators including wild native bees & butterflies, mice, deer, etc. They protect and rebuild soils damaged by decades of overgrazing. Eucalyptus is the preferred habitat for native monarch butterfly overwintering congregations, and wild boar rooting increases plant diversity and fulfills the soil-stirring function formerly performed by grizzlies before they were hunted to extinction in California. In every case, without exception, "invasive" species are the direct result of human disturbance of the landscape, or a secondary ripple effect from other disturbance. They are a symptom of our abuses of the land, not the cause. Invasive alien hysteria is based on faulty, antiquated ecology - the idea of stable, coevolved ecosystems is now entirely discredited by modern ecosystem studies and paleobiology.

Q: What can you do?

A: 1) Educate: When people talk about "invasive species", ask if they are aware that Monsanto and other herbicide manufacturers have been instrumental in forming public opinion on this, that they have backed the Exotic Pest Plant councils, and have compromised environmental organizations and scientists alike. Point out that "invaders" are actually disturbance indicators occupying human-damaged landscapes and that they often have highly beneficial ecological effects. Educate people about the true origins of our natural ecosystems, the extent of the natural migrations of species, and that anti-invader ideology is founded on antiquated and discredited views of ecology, much like the destructive "predator control" theories held by well-meaning environmentalists of a century ago.

Mention the fact that the first programs to "cleanse the landscape of foreign plants" were initiated by the National Socialist government in Germany, under Adolf Hitler. Remember: Almost all of the people who believe in the threat of "invasive species" are sincere, well-meaning environmentalists who have been misled by highly persuasive propaganda. We must reach out to them through education, not alienate them by a combative or accusatory stance. Check in with our website now and then as we upload scientific critiques of alien-invader pseudoscience, and join our mailing list to keep updated.

2) Agitate: Question environmental organizations you belong to about their policies or attitudes about the "invasive species" hysteria. Educate them about the points mentioned above, and if they persist in an anti-"alien" stance, check who is on their board of directors, and inquire into their sources of funding. Refuse to support organizations backing the hysteria, and urge others to do the same. Write letters to the editor to local papers and magazines challenging any distortions or propaganda that appear in their pages. Demand accountability from managers of

local parks and wildlands, and take them to task for any herbicide use or destructive extermination projects. Make yourself heard!

3) Organize: Coordinate opposition and direct actions against destructive extermination projects, whether Eucalyptus clearcuts, herbicide use in natural areas, or exterminations of wild animals. Join anti-invasive species groups in your area to monitor their activities, & attend volunteer "weed-pulls" and other extermination projects in order to monitor for herbicide use, the destruction of native species, and other ecosystem damage.

FAQ available online at <http://www.geocities.com/nowhitelist>