



2016 PlantWise Program

Summary Report



Yellow Flag Iris; R. Mueller

**HEALTHY LANDSCAPES AND
COMMUNITIES FREE OF INVASIVE SPECIES**

Acknowledgements

The ISCBC would like to thank the organizations, agencies, groups and individuals that contributed to the PlantWise program in 2016. The ISCBC would like to specifically thank:

- » ISCBC Horticulture Advisory Committee

Our 2016 PlantWise Ambassadors:

- » East Kootenay Invasive Species Council
- » Fraser Valley Invasive Plant Council
- » Coastal Invasive Species Committee
- » Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society
- » Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver
- » Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council
- » Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
- » Lillooet Regional Invasive Species Society
- » Northwest Invasive Plant Council
- » Peace River Regional District
- » BC Communities in Bloom
- » ISCBC PlantWise program staff

The following industry leaders that have signed the PlantWise Code of Conduct:

- » Billie's Flower House
- » Birch Grove Nursery
- » Hunter Garden Centres
- » GardenWorks
- » Hanna and Hanna Orchards
- » Hanson's Landscaping and Nursery
- » Heike Designs
- » Hunniford Gardens
- » Lasting Landscapes
- » N.A.T.S. Nursery
- » Nakusp Heritage Nursery
- » Nestor's Market & Pharmacy, Whistler
- » Nico's Nurseryland
- » SplitRock Environmental
- » Tipi Mountain Native Plants Ltd.

2016 PlantWise Program

BACKGROUND

The introduction and spread of horticulturally invasive plants in BC greatly affects the province's environment, economy, and society, including human and animal health. It is through human activities that the majority of invasive plants both within BC and throughout Canada are introduced and spread, causing significant and harmful impacts to our communities. Preventive actions to reduce and stop invasive species spread is critical.

Horticultural activities have been identified as key pathways responsible for the introduction and spread of invasive plants. In most cases, these plants were and may currently be imported to Canada and BC for food, medicine, fiber, ornamental and/or scientific purposes. Once introduced and established, and without natural controls on their populations, these species often escape cultivation and spread rapidly, outcompeting native species and impacting ecosystems. Horticulturally invasive plants are now found in a wide array of environments in BC, including gardens, orchards, vineyards, hayfields, crops, wetland, parks and wild lands. Every year a small proportion of these invasive plants and their propagules are promoted, propagated, sold, purchased, gifted, traded, relocated and/or improperly disposed of by plant growers, suppliers, wholesalers, retailers, specifiers and backyard gardeners. Consumers often select and make their purchases based on plant beauty, form and function – rarely are decisions made on regional plant invasiveness. Many consumers (public and otherwise) trust that growers and sellers will provide them with adequate plant education and awareness, and therefore would sell only safe, non-invasive plants. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and regionally invasive plant species continue to be grown and sold alongside non-invasive ones.



Since 2014, PlantWise has reached over 60,000 gardeners, youth, professionals, horticulture industry members and the general public.

PLANTWISE

In 2013, the Council developed and implemented the PlantWise (PW) program, a leading-edge program specifically designed to address a major pathway of invasive plant spread in BC – horticulture. The goal of the program is to prevent the direct and indirect introduction and further spread of horticulturally invasive plants by educating gardeners and industry members on the impacts associated with invasive species and encouraging them to change their behaviour so that they choose to purchase only non-invasive plants for their businesses and homes.

Simultaneously, the program encourages, supports and promotes the horticulture industry's efforts to become invasive free by working with these partners to remove invasive plants from their inventory.

To successfully and effectively reach both gardeners and those within the horticulture trade, the PW program employs principles based on Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM), which focuses on encouraging lasting, sustainable behaviour change in key audiences, in this case, horticulture industry and consumers. The PW program combines resources and initiatives that are designed to both encourage sustainable behaviour change and build consumer demand for similar but non-invasive plants.

The industry component of the program focuses on providing information and resources that are designed to assist plant growers, retailers, landscapers and specifiers to transition to an invasive-free business by providing them with tools and incentives to do so. The consumer component focuses on educating gardeners on the impacts of invasive plants and provides easy-to-use tools and resources to enable and educate on responsible plant choices. The PW message is a positive one that encourages gardeners and industry to play an integral role in protecting BC's environment, economy and society from the impacts of these invasive plants.

In 2013, PW was initiated as a pilot program in two geographic locations that focused on delivering key messaging, resources and training to local and regional consumers, industry-related businesses, gardening and stewardship related organizations, as well as gardeners and the general public. Program outreach involved delivering the PW message at key regional and provincial events, such as garden tours and shows, seed swaps, community markets, festivals and within retail garden centers.

Delivery of the PlantWise program has continued annually on a provincial scale, resulting in strategic partnerships with key provincial and regional groups (Ambassadors) all of whom are involved in, or have a vested interest in, invasive plant education and/or management. Since its inception, the PW program messaging of "know what you grow", "plant non-invasive plants in your garden" and "be plantwise" and associated resources have been shared at well over 620 education and outreach events in over 150 communities across British Columbia. Between 2014 and today, there have been approximately 20,000 in-person PlantWise interactions between ISCBC staff, PW Ambassadors and the public, and an estimated 60,000 gardeners, youth, professionals, horticulture industry members and the general public have been communicated with regarding the PW program and messaging.

PLANTWISE 2016

In 2016, there were 10 Ambassadors across BC, who shared the PW program and messaging at over 200 education and outreach events in over 70 communities throughout British Columbia. More than 8000 in-person interactions took place between ISCBC staff, PW Ambassadors and the public, and an estimated 22,000 gardeners, youth, professionals, horticulture industry

members and the general public have been reached with PW program messaging and resources. Some examples of PlantWise events include:

- » Farmers markets
- » Rotary presentations and events
- » Garden club meetings
- » Master Gardener training workshops

The ISCBC welcomes new and interested Ambassador partners to the PW program and offers access to free online PW resources and a range of printed materials and tools for the cost of printing. In 2016, the PW program developed and extended to partners a free online link for the public and partners to use to make a commitment to be PlantWise. This [PlantWise Commitment](#) button is a simple and easy-to-install way to encourage the public's commitment to being PlantWise by only planting non-invasive plants in their gardens.

The ISCBC and partners are looking forward to another successful (and fun!) PlantWise year while continuing to deliver the program; collaborate with provincial partners, members of the horticulture industry and the public and gardeners; and preventing the introduction and further spread of invasive horticulture plants within BC.

For more information and to become a PlantWise partner, please contact Danielle Toperczer at (250) 503-1588 / dtoperczer@bcinvasives.ca

Thank you for being PlantWise!