

Several invasive plant species that threaten the ecosystems of Ukraine

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These alien (invasive) species cause significant harm to nature and humans: they completely change the landscape, displace native species, reduce biodiversity and worsen human health. The invading plants have become a part of the flora of Ukraine and are almost impossible to eradicate.

The reasons for the success of invasive species are: the absence of natural enemies and diseases, the resistance to resource deficiency, the ability to quickly populate. Let's consider a few of the most dangerous invasive plant species that behave like aggressive invaders.

Ash-leaved maple, or American (Acer negundo)

- Tree of Sapindaceae family is native of North America.
- The species was acclimatized at the beginning of the 20th century to create fast growing forests.
- Now it is found everywhere in Ukraine, very quickly captures new territories and destroys the biological balance.
- The crown of this tree shades and inhibits the growth of native species seedlings.
- In spring, the pollen from male trees *Acer negundo* begins the polynose season for people with allergies



Canadian goldenrod (Solidago canadensis)

- Perennial plant of Asteraceae family is native of North America.
- Introduced to Europe in the 18th century.
- Shows the ability to spread uncontrollably and permanently fix in natural ecosystems, displacing local species.
- One plant produces up to 10,000 seeds. In addition, this species quickly spreads vegetatively with the help of rhizomes.
- Forms very dense thickets - 300 plants per 1 sq.m.



Ambrosia artemisiifolia

- Annual plant of Asteraceae family is native of North America.
- Introduced to Europe at the end of the 19th century,
- Intensively displaces and suppresses wild and cultivated grasses.
- Severely impoverishes and dries up the soil.
- Each bush gives 150 thousand seeds per season, which remain viable for 40 years.
- The fight against ambrosia is carried out by chemical method, regular mowing and uprooting



Heracleum sosnowskyi

- Perennial plants of Apiaceae family is native of the Caucasus.
- In the 1960s, it was cultivated in Ukraine for livestock feed, because it gives a large biomass.
- A very dangerous species for humans, because it causes severe chemical burns upon contact with plant parts.
- This is one of the largest grasses of the flora of Ukraine - the height reaches 4-5 m.
- *Heracleum sosnowskyi* intensively spreads, shading and displacing native species.

