

Invasive alien species in Belgium
 ias.biodiversity.be
Groene Pioniers Project
 groenepioniers.be
Manual of the Alien Plants of Belgium
 alienplantsbelgium.be
Tracking Invasive Alien Species (TriAS)
 https://osf.io/7dpgr/
La biodiversité en Wallonie-Les espèces invasives
 biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/invasives.html?IDC=5632
List of Invasive Alien Species of Union concern
 ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/list/
Ecopedia
 ecopedia.be
Research Institute for Nature and Forest
 inbo.be

REFERENCES

R.E. Steven Dessein, Meise Botanic Garden, Nieuwelaan 38, 1860 Meise - 2020

INVASIVE PLANTS OF BELGIUM

WHAT IS AN ALIEN INVASIVE PLANT ?

These plants are introduced by humans outside of their area of origin, are spreading in their new area of occupancy and are a threat to biodiversity and ecosystem services, such as food production, water purification or erosion prevention.

HOW ARE THEY INTRODUCED ?

There are many ways alien plants are introduced, either intentionally as crops and ornamental horticulture or accidentally, as a result of seed and soil contamination. Throw-outs from gardens and garden ponds is an important pathway of alien plants into the environment.

In Europe almost 70% of alien species have been intentionally introduced. Introduction of alien organisms have increased in recent decades with the expansion of global trade and transport.

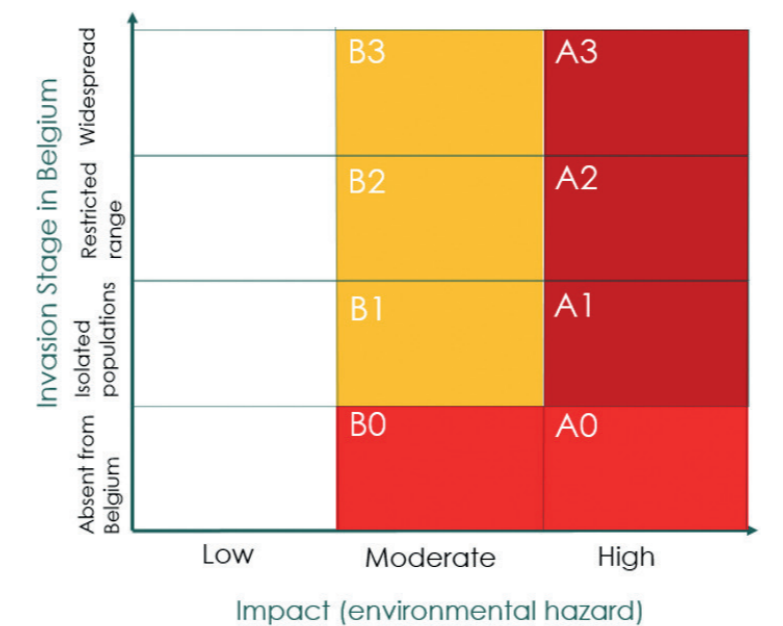
WHY ARE THEY A THREAT ?

Invasive plants generally share features that enable them to easily colonize new areas. They grow fast and reproduce quickly. They may also lack natural enemies in their new environment. All these characteristics make invasive species effective competitors to native flora. They can also impact native plants through hybridization or by changing the water and soil conditions. Such competitive advantages result in rapid spread of the introduced species allowing them to become dominant in certain ecosystems and threatening local biodiversity. The Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (BFIS) has created a standardised system to assess the environmental impact of alien species (see figure):

- Letters indicate the impacts of invasive species on the environment
- Numbers indicate the invasion stage in Belgium

For example, A3 are the species of greatest concern with the highest impact on the environment (A) and a wide area of spread (3).

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Design
 Lara Van de Merckt & Simon Raiff.



Classification system adopted by the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species (BFIS) to identify alien species that constitute a threat for native biodiversity - adapted from ias.biodiversity.be

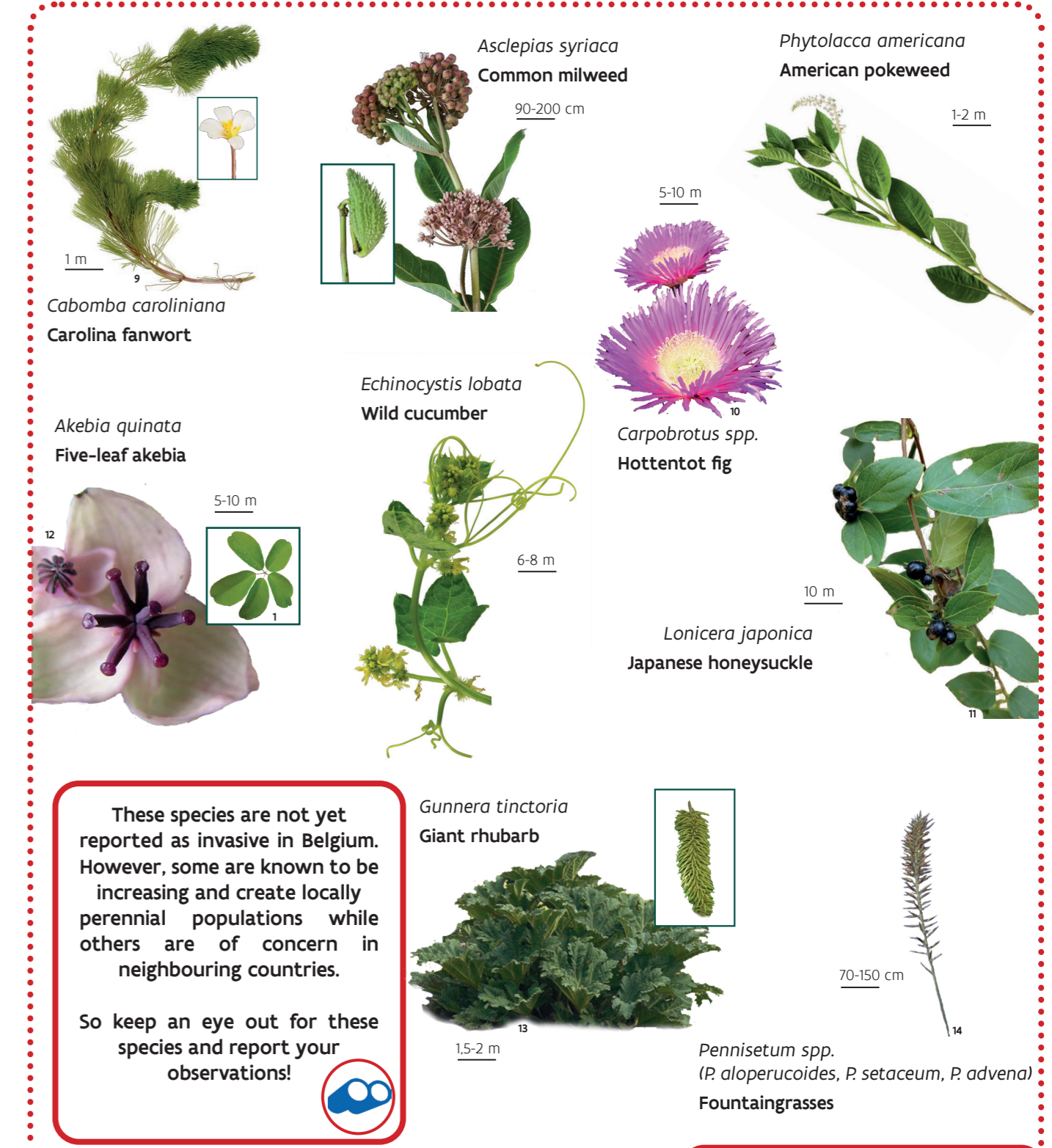
WHAT CAN YOU DO ?

Don't plant them
 Invasive plants mainly get introduced from gardens, so do some research before planting a new species in your garden, there are a lot of native alternatives that can be found on groenepioniers.be

Protect local biodiversity
 Invasive plants thrive in disturbed habitats, therefore by protecting, respecting and cherishing our nature we also prevent the expansion of invasive plants.

Destruction/containment
 When a few individuals are present in your garden, you can uproot them -completely- and destroy the remains. Proper disposal of the removed plant parts is key as some species can regenerate or can still produce seeds. Be mindful that many of these plants spread using underground roots and rhizomes, some can regenerate from small pieces of plant material. Introductions in new areas often result from dumped compost, contaminated garden tools and machinery.

Report
 Mapping and assessing the spread of invasive plants is key to good management. You can help by reporting and sending pictures of the plant species you see around you using different platforms such as waarnemingen.be, observation.be or biodiversite.wallonie.be



These species are not yet reported as invasive in Belgium. However, some are known to be increasing and create locally perennial populations while others are of concern in neighbouring countries. So keep an eye out for these species and report your observations!

ALERT LIST