



DALLAS ARBORETUM
Education

Garden STEM at Home
Invasive Species



WE GROW MINDS, TOO.

INVASIVE SPECIES



OBJECTIVE:

STUDENTS WILL LEARN WHAT INVASIVE SPECIES ARE, WHY THEY ARE PROBLEMATIC AND HOW TO PREVENT THEIR SPREAD.

SOURCE

Project Learning Tree PreK-8 Activity Guide

BACKGROUND

Native species are plants or animals that occur naturally in a certain area. Typically, they have evolved alongside other species that naturally keep their population in check through predation, competition and disease.

Invasive species, sometimes referred to as exotic or alien species, are species that have been introduced - either accidentally or purposefully - to an area in which they didn't naturally occur.

Their introduction can upend the natural balance of an area through outcompeting of other species or a lack of natural controls (like predators). A common student misconception is that invasive species are always harmful, but they can also be beneficial (such as crop species).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Discuss the term invasive/invasion and ask kids to think about what the term might mean in terms of plants and animals.
2. Distribute one or two passages from the Alien Invasion Student Sheet (linked below) readings to students.
3. Ask students to complete a chart based on their readings:
 - a. Species
 - b. Native region
 - c. Why/How did it get to new environment?
 - d. How far did it travel?
 - e. Characteristics that help it thrive in the new environment
 - f. Effects on the new environment
4. Discuss together: similarities between the species, differences, typical characteristics of invasive species and ways they spread.
5. Optional: Ask students to research an additional invasive species that is a problem in your region and create an infographic or poster about it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Explore the Invasive Species Texas Connection Additional Resources Guide from PLT:
http://www.plttexas.org/uploadedFiles/Websites/PLT_Texas/Content/Texas_Connection/Activity%2012%20Invasive%20Species.pdf

Explore the Invasive Species Additional Resources Guide from PLT:
<https://www.plt.org/activity-resources/prek-8-activity-12-invasive-species/>