

What is an invasive species?

An invasive species is a nonnative species that: (1) causes or may cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health; or (2) threatens or may threaten natural resources or the use of natural resources in the state. [Minn. Stat. § 84D.01](#), subd. 9a. Invasive species can be mammals, fish, insects, plants, viruses, pathogens, birds, earthworms, or other organisms.

How are invasive species classified?

For regulatory purposes, state agencies classify invasive species as terrestrial or aquatic. Terrestrial invasive species (TIS) inhabit land; aquatic invasive species (AIS) live in the water. State agencies further classify invasive species using various factors such as prevalence in the environment and the risk posed to native species and the state's economy. For example, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and other government, academic, and industry partners, classifies invasive plant pests as regulated or nonregulated. MDA focuses its efforts on the species that pose the greatest anticipated threat to the state's economy and environment.

The DNR classifies nonnative species into four categories for purposes of regulation: (1) prohibited (which cannot be possessed, imported, purchased, sold, propagated, transported, or introduced, except under certain exceptions); (2) regulated (which cannot be introduced to the wild, except under certain exceptions); (3) unlisted; and (4) unregulated.

Which agencies regulate invasive species?

The MDA and the DNR both regulate invasive species and the human activities that may cause their introduction or spread. The following table summarizes the jurisdiction of each agency:

Agency	Jurisdiction	Current Example Species	Authorized Activities
MDA	To prevent or slow the establishment of terrestrial invasive species that damage crops, trees, or other plants (Minn. Stat. § 18G.01)	Emerald ash borer, Palmer amaranth, soybean rust, gypsy moth, potato cyst nematode	Broad regulatory authority, including the power to treat or order treatment of public or private lands, issue penalties, and restrict the intentional or unintentional human movement of invasive species and articles that may harbor them
DNR	To prevent and curb the spread of invasive species of aquatic plants and wild animals (Minn. Stat. § 84D.02 , subd. 1)	Zebra mussel, Eurasian watermilfoil, invasive carp, spiny waterflea, starry stonewort	Authority to designate and regulate invasive species and infested waters, including inspections and enforcement of applicable laws including the issuance of penalties

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How do the agencies coordinate efforts?

The MDA is responsible for early detection and initial efforts to control or eradicate TIS. However, once a forest invasive species (e.g., emerald ash borer, or EAB) is considered widespread in an area of the state, the DNR assumes responsibility for leading any ongoing management efforts, particularly on state lands. For instance, the MDA is responsible for identifying EAB in new areas of the state while the DNR works with communities in infested areas to manage community forest impacts.

What are some examples of the activities the agencies perform?

MDA personnel install and collect invasive species traps; sample fields; inspect imported commodities; treat thousands of forested acres to suppress gypsy moth; investigate reports of invasive species infestation; research and release biological agents to control invasive species; inspect nursery plant growers and retailers and firewood retailers; inspect seed for any invasive weed seeds; provide technical assistance to local units of government and others to limit the spread of existing invasive plants; provide information to industry and the general public; inspect imported fruits and vegetables upon request; maintain an Arrest-the-Pest hotline; and implement and enforce quarantines to restrict the movement of invasive species and regulated articles such as firewood that may harbor them. The MDA also conducts surveys that document the absence of specific pests, which ensures that those who sell Minnesota plant commodities have access to international markets.

DNR personnel enforce laws and regulations designed to prevent the spread of invasive species; inspect and decontaminate watercraft entering and leaving public water accesses; delegate the agency's authority to and train local government staff to complete watercraft inspections and decontaminations; train and permit lake service providers (e.g., dock installers); coordinate with local, regional, and national partners on the prevention of invasive species; work with partners to complete invasive carp removal exercises; provide permits, grants, and technical assistance for the management of aquatic plants; research and provide potential risk reduction efforts for organisms in trade; manage or control infestations of invasive species where feasible; work on detecting and monitoring populations of invasive species; and provide educational information to policymakers and the public on invasive species.

What else is the state doing to address invasive species?

The legislature has provided direction and funding for the establishment of two research centers at the University of Minnesota. The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) works to develop research-based solutions to address AIS, and the Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center (MITPPC) works to develop research-based solutions to address TIS.

Where do funds come from?

DNR and MDA activities are largely funded by the state's general fund, federal grants, and dedicated revenues. Dedicated revenues include a \$10.60 surcharge on the registration of watercraft and a \$5 fee on nonresident fishing licenses that fund activities at the DNR, and fees assessed on nursery plant growers and retailers and seed labelers that fund activities at MDA. MAISRC has received state funding from the general fund, clean water fund, and the environment and natural resources trust fund. MITPPC has received state funding from the general fund and the environment and natural resources trust fund.



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