

What you need to know about how to **ERADICATE CONTAIN CONTROL** **INVASIVE PLANTS**

An Action Plan for Gabriola

The problem

Invasive plants are:

- introduced, not native to our region
- aggressive, spreading rapidly
- hard to control once established

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Invasive plants pose various threats on Gabriola:

- are toxic to humans and animals (e.g. Giant hogweed, Daphne, Tansy ragwort)
- can harm trees and structures (e.g. Ivy, Knotweed)
- are a fire hazard (e.g. Broom, Gorse)
- disrupt local ecosystems by displacing native plants (**ALL** invasives)



Invasive
monoculture...

...or natural biodiversity?

Daphne (left) smothering everything else... removing it allowed native plants like Oregon grape to thrive again.

This brochure identifies the most common invasive plants on Gabriola and classifies them into 3 categories: plants to **ERADICATE**, **CONTAIN** and **CONTROL**.

Taking action

In your own back yard....

- check regularly for invasive plants: keep them away from road and trail frontages to prevent them from spreading
- talk with your neighbours about dealing with invasives that may be spreading between your properties
- be 'plantwise': only plant species known to be non-invasive
- choose native plants: these may be available free from the GaLTT Native Plant Depot, or ask at island nurseries

Get involved in community efforts ...

- get together with others in your neighbourhood to tackle local infestations
- report large problem areas on public land to hrc@galitt.ca
- join GaLTT work parties: many hands make light work!



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

Dealing with small or isolated plants promptly prevents them from spreading and becoming a bigger problem. Getting rid of larger patches takes time and sustained effort – but working together makes the task less daunting!

TACKLING INVASIVE PLANTS ON GABRIOLA

ERADICATE

Plants in this category have been found in small numbers on Gabriola.

WE NEED TO ERADICATE THEM BEFORE THEY SPREAD

SEEK ADVICE ON SAFE REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL OF THESE PLANTS BEFORE TACKLING THEM!

Giant hogweed ▶

Heracleum mantegazzianum

- Large perennial, up to 5.0 m
- Produces umbrella-shaped white flowerheads May onwards
- Spreads via seed or plant fragments
- **DO NOT TOUCH: contains toxic sap that burns eyes and skin**



Gorse • *Ulex europaeus*

- Large spiny evergreen shrub, up to 2.0 m
- Produces yellow flowers similar to Broom
- Spreads when flowers form seed pods (**poisonous**)
- **Highly flammable - wildfire risk**



Knotweed

Fallopia species, *Polygonum polystachyum*

- Deciduous, up to 5.0 m, bamboo-like stems
- Small white-green flowers along stems in summer
- Grows new plants from root fragments/seeds
- Roots extend many metres, **can break through concrete**

TACKLING INVASIVE PLANTS ON GABRIOLA

CONTAIN

Established large infestations exist in many parts of the island.

CONTAIN EXISTING INFESTATIONS AND PREVENT SPREAD TO OTHER AREAS



Scotch broom • *Cytisus scoparius*

- Evergreen, growing up to 2.0 m
- Produces yellow flowers in May/June
- Spreads via ripe seed pods (**poisonous**)
- **Highly flammable - wildfire risk**



Daphne/Spurge laurel • *Daphne laureola*

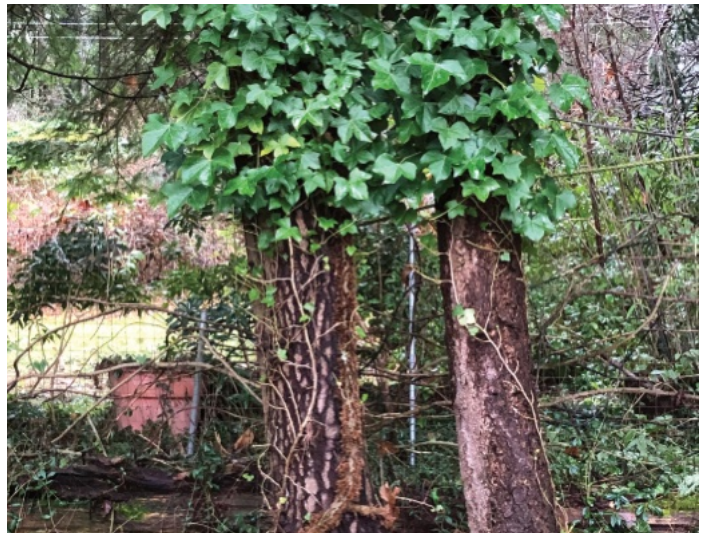
- Evergreen, growing to 1.5 m with glossy leaves
- Produces small yellow-green flowers in March/April
- Spreads via small black berries (**poisonous**)
- **Toxic sap can irritate skin & affect breathing**



Tansy ragwort

Senecio jacobaeae

- Grows rosette of leaves in first year
- Stems in second year produce yellow flower clusters in July/August
- Spreads widely through seed, even from cut plants – **bag flowerheads**
- **Poisonous to livestock**



Common ivy • *Hedera helix*

- Evergreen climber, up to 30.0 m with waxy leaves
- Mature plants produce small clusters of green-yellow flowers in late summer
- Spreads via stems on ground forming new roots and from its black berries (**poisonous**)
- **Smother's ground vegetation and its weight can bring down trees**

TACKLING INVASIVE PLANTS ON GABRIOLA

CONTROL

Infestations of varying sizes are common in many parts of the island.

CONTROL TO LIMIT SPREAD INTO PARKS AND OTHER CONSERVATION AREAS



Himalayan blackberry

Rubus armeniacus

- Dense, prickly evergreen, with arching stems up to 5.0 m
- White flowers ripen to purple-black berries July onwards
- Spreads from berries and stems touching ground to form new roots
- Rapidly smothers other vegetation

Other invasive plants to watch for...



Holly • *Ilex aquifolium*



Deadnettle • *Lamium* species



Periwinkle • *Vinca major/minor*



Common tansy • *Tanacetum vulgare*

For more detailed information on how to identify and deal with each of these invasive plants on Gabriola, go to the Invasive Species pages on the GaLTT website - galtt.ca/invasives/

Halting the spread of invasive plants on Gabriola

IMPORTANT: Both removal techniques and disposal options vary for different species: check galtt.ca/invasives/ for advice on how best to deal with specific plants.

Removal

Remove invasive plants by cutting or pulling to prevent them from spreading. **For best results:**

- **Time plant removal carefully**

Mature plants should be tackled before they produce berries OR set seed

*January-March: Daphne; May-June: Scotch broom;
July-August: Tansy ragwort; Fall: Ivy, holly*

Small plants can be weeded out (roots and all) at any time when ground is soft

- **To prevent plants from growing back**
 - plants with woody stems (e.g. Broom, Daphne) – cut **below** ground level
 - softer-stemmed plants (e.g. Tansy ragwort) – pull out completely if possible
- **Try to minimise soil disturbance** during removal or this may trigger seed germination
- **Replant** the area afterwards, as leaving bare earth invites other invasive plants to move in
- **Check for regrowth** in subsequent years



Disposal

Dispose of invasive plants carefully to prevent them dropping seeds or re-rooting and spreading in new locations.

Plants in our ERADICATE category:

- **should be taken to the RDN regional landfill as 'controlled waste' and must be bagged and labelled accordingly**

Plants in our CONTAIN and CONTROL categories:

- are accepted at RDN landfill as **compostable yard waste**
- can be taken to any GVFD drop-off event for **controlled burning**
- can be wrapped in a bag or tarp and left to **decompose** in your yard, but remove any flowerheads, mature seeds/berries first
- **small plants** (*except Daphne*), also flowerheads, seed-pods and berries, can be put into your RDN green organics cart for industrial composting



Important resources

GaLTT resources

GaLTT's Invasive Species Committee organises regular work parties to remove invasive plants from island conservation areas, parks and trails. We also offer advice and support to help islanders manage invasive plants on private land and along roadsides in their neighbourhood.

Visit the GaLTT website: galtt.ca/invasives/

- to find out more about invasive plants on Gabriola and how to tackle them
- for links to other online resources such as:
 - **Coastal Invasive Species Committee:** fact sheets on many invasive plants
 - **Invasive Species Council of BC:** non-invasive plants to grow (*PlantWise* and *Grow Me Instead*)
 - **Invasive Species in the RDN:** local info on removing and disposing of invasive plants
 - **Broombusters.org:** advice and a video on how to cut Broom

Email us at hrc@galtt.ca to:

- get specific advice on identifying and dealing with invasive plants
- borrow specialised plant removal tools

Come and talk to us at the Saturday market during the summer months!

About GaLTT

We are the Gabriola Land & Trails Trust. We carry out our activities, with gratitude and respect, on the traditional unceded territories of the Snuneymuxw and other First Nations, whose peoples have had a deep physical and spiritual connection with this island and its surrounding waters since time immemorial.

Our “**conserve + connect**” tagline expresses our mandate concisely—we aim to conserve the island’s natural ecosystems while providing a network of sustainable parklands and trails to connect them.

Our Invasive Species Committee calls on a large and dedicated team of members and volunteers to manage plant removal and ecological restoration in our island parks. Together with our Nature Stewards program we educate islanders about how to best deal with invasive plants on their own properties and how to enhance native habitat.



MORE INFO

galtt.ca • hrc@galtt.ca

