

Exotic And Invasive Plants In Agriculture

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Southern Illinois has significant plant diversity, but nearly 80 percent of Illinois' total acreage is used for crop production. The invasion of non-native or exotic plants poses a serious threat to Illinois agriculture and natural ecosystems. To maintain

high productivity, farmers must continually remove pesky plants that compete for the same resources such as light, nutrients and water, or ones that may cause harm to people or animals.

The Illinois Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (CAPS) is a combined effort to collect and manage data on plant pests, weeds and biological control agents. CAPS seeks to safeguard our environmental security from exotic pests that threaten our production and ecological systems. The Illinois program is a joint effort including the Illinois Natural History Survey,

Illinois Department of Agriculture and USDA.

CAPS has produced a number of valuable fact sheets on Exotic, Invasive Plants in Illinois Habitats including agriculture, grasslands, woodlands and aquatic areas. A few of the weeds listed for agronomic crops include poison hemlock, mile-a-minute vine, Japanese hops and kudzu. Some weeds of concern for grasslands are teasel, spotted knapweed, common reed and giant hogweed. I do have a limited number of these color fact sheets and would share single copies upon receiving your request. Contact Dennis Epplin, deplin@illinois.edu, or telephone 618-242-9310.

You can also obtain information at the CAPS website: www.inhs.uiuc.edu/research/CAPS/. Early detection of invasive weed species is critical in preventing or limiting damage to crops and loss of habitat. Δ

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