

September 2006

Dear Middle School Teacher:

The Exotic Invasive Plant Species Curriculum contains 14 lesson plans written by a middle school teacher, Leslie Marra, from Knoxville Tennessee. In designing the lesson plans, Leslie took the needs of both the students and the teachers into consideration. All lesson plans are written:

- to take into consideration the cognitive, social, and affective development of middle school students;
- to support the students for success;
- to provide background information for the teacher relevant to each lesson;
- for one or two 45- to 50-minute periods; and
- to require few materials.

The lessons are designed to engage students in activities such as Web quests, school ground walks, art projects, chain tag, and a Jeopardy-like contest. This curriculum has a variety of activities, which are designed to engage and at times entertain.

If you know little about exotic invasive species you can still teach this curriculum. Lesson plans provide background information for the teacher. In addition, Web sites, such as Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (<http://www.samab.org/Focus/Invasive/about.html>) provide pictures and flashcards of common exotic invasive species. You and your students can print picture of invasive plants and take them with you on a walk through the school grounds and neighborhood. You may be surprised how many common plants are exotic invasive species (e.g., mimosa tree and bush honeysuckle).

The project team designed the curriculum so that it addresses the North Carolina Science Standard Course of Study and the Tennessee Science Curriculum Standards. By teaching from this curriculum you will be addressing standards and learning outcomes related to ecosystems and scientific inquiry. In addition the curriculum works toward all five goals of environmental education—developing awareness, knowledge, skills and attitudes and giving students an opportunity to participate.

Recent research by the State Education and Environment Roundtable has shown that students enjoy studying their local environment. This curriculum focuses on the environment around your school and in your community. We hope it engages you and your students in the joy of learning about the world around you.

Sincerely,

Gary Peeples  
Rosalyn McKeown  
Jack Ranney  
Leslie Marra