

LESSON 7: MOST WANTED EXOTIC INVASIVE PLANT POSTER

Duration: One or two 45-minute class periods

Background information:

“As a global threat of extinction, bioinvasion may already rank just behind habitat loss” (p21).

For some organisms exotic invasive plant species are a major threat for extinction. In most cases, exotic species suppress native species without making them totally extinct. Successful invasions often cause “functional extinctions” in that native species may exist but grow at such low densities that they cannot fulfill their ecological roles, such as providing forage for native fauna.

Source: Bright, Chris. 1998. Life Out of Bounds: Bioinvasion in a Borderless World. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Objectives:

- Convey research findings regarding the history of an exotic invasive plant species.
- Convey research findings regarding the consequences of an exotic invasive plant species’ presence in an ecosystem.

Prepare in advance:

- Copy Handout 1 (Exotic Invasive Species Web Quest Web Sites). Cut into fourths and give one to each student.
- Copy Handout 2 (blank “Wanted” poster template) for each student.
- Copy Handout 3 (Rubric for Most Wanted Exotic Invasive Plant Poster) for each student.
- Optional: make a transparency of the Example Poster provided

Materials:

- one computer connected to the Internet for every two students
- colored pencils
- drawing paper
- lab/field notebooks

Description:

Students will visit several Web sites and choose an exotic invasive species of the Southern Appalachian Region. Students will then gather information about their chosen exotic plants and use it to create a WANTED poster.

Instructional sequence:

(10 minutes)

- **Request** students find their field notebooks and locate their entries about exotic invasive species.
- **Review** some of the species for which they did online research.
- **Instruct** students to create a poster describing an exotic invasive plant of the Southern Appalachian Region using the Wanted Poster template. Posters should include:
 - a simple, line drawing of the plant
 - common and scientific names
 - brief description (leaf shape, flower color)
 - place of origin of the invasive plant
 - why it is a threat (a description of its crime)
 - possible ways to fight/control it
 - reference listing of Websites where information was found for student's poster

Optional assessment task:

Direct students to present their poster to the rest of the class.

Encourage students to give a creative, entertaining presentation of their “culprit.”

Sources:

Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere, online at <

http://samab.org/Focus/Invasive/about.html>, accessed 10/12/05.

Invasive and Exotic Species, available online at <http://www.invasive.org/weeds.cfm>, accessed 10/12/05

Image of Ailanthus leaves adapted from photograph by Chris Evans, The University of Georgia,

online at <http://www.invasive.org/browse/detail.cfm?imgnum=1330079>, accessed 10/14/05

National Park Service Fact Sheets, Ailanthus altissima, available online at <

http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/aial1.htm>, accessed 10/12/05