

# Clean Equipment Protocol for Industry

Inspecting and cleaning equipment for the purposes of invasive species prevention



*Catalyst for research and response*



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Inquiries regarding this document can be directed to the Ontario Invasive Plant Council

PO Box 2800, 4601 Guthrie Drive

Peterborough, ON

K9J 8L5

Phone: (705) 748-6324

Email: [info@ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](mailto:info@ontarioinvasiveplants.ca)

For more information on invasive plants in Ontario, visit [www.ontario.ca/invasivespecies](http://www.ontario.ca/invasivespecies), [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca), [www.invadingspecies.com](http://www.invadingspecies.com), or [www.invasivespeciescentre.ca](http://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca).

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# Introduction

## Why Invasive Plants are a Problem

Invasive alien species are “a growing environmental and economic threat to Ontario. Alien species are plants, animals and microorganisms that have been accidentally or deliberately introduced into areas beyond their normal range. Invasive species are defined as harmful alien species whose introduction or spread threatens the environment, the economy, or society, including human health (Government of Canada 2004).” (Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan, 2012). The great majority of plant invasions occur in habitats that have been disturbed either naturally or by humans (Rejmanek 1989; Hobbs and Huenneke 1992; Hobbs 2000).

The ecological effects of invasive species are often irreversible and, once established, they are extremely difficult and costly to control or eradicate. According to Pimental et al. (1999), invasive species in the U.S. cause economic and environmental damages totalling over \$138 billion per year, with agricultural weed control and crop losses totalling approximately \$34 billion per year. Exact figures for the total economic and environmental damages are not available for Canada. In Ontario however, the costs of dealing with just one invasive species is astonishing; Zebra Mussels cost Ontario power producers who draw water from the lake \$6.4 million per year in increased control/operating costs and about \$1 million per year in research costs (Colautti et al. 2006).

Invasive species can spread to new areas when contaminated mud, gravel, water, soil and plant material are unknowingly moved by equipment used on different sites. This method of spread is called an unintentional introduction, and is one of the four major pathways for invasive species introduction into a new area of Ontario (Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan, 2012).



**Buckthorn removal, Lynde Shores Conservation Area.**

Photo by: Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority

Invasive plant seed and other propagules (plant material, i.e. rhizomes) have the ability to travel sight unseen in mud attached to or lodged in various parts and spaces between parts of vehicles, machinery and other mechanical equipment. A recent study at Montana State University found that most seeds (99% on paved roads and 96% on unpaved roads) stayed attached to the vehicle after traveling 160 miles (257 km) under dry conditions.

Invasive plant species are commonly transported on or in vehicles and construction equipment when they are moved to new locations. Those vehicles include four-wheel drives, excavators, tractors, loaders, water trucks and all-terrain vehicles. Failure to properly clean vehicles and machinery of soils, mud, and contaminated water that may contain invasive species seed and propagules can result in permanent, irreversible environmental impacts. These impacts can mean substantial cost to the landowner, land manager and/or the user. Businesses may also face liability issues for activities and operations that result in the introduction of invasive species.

**Some of the invasive species in Ontario which have been known to spread through equipment transfer include:**

- **Common Buckthorn** (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
- **Dog-strangling Vine** (*Cynanchum rossicum*)
- **Garlic Mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
- **Glossy Buckthorn** (*Frangula alnus*)
- **Japanese Knotweed** (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- **Miscanthus or Chinese Silver Grass** (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
- **Invasive Phragmites or Common Reed** (*Phragmites australis subsp. australis*)
- **Reed Canary Grass** (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- **Wild Parsnip** (*Pastinaca sativa*)
- **Wild Chervil** (*Anthriscus sylvestri*)



**Dog-strangling Vine**  
(*Cynanchum rossicum*)  
Photo by: Hayley Anderson



**Garlic Mustard**  
(*Alliaria petiolata*)  
Photo by: Ken Towle



**Invasive Phragmites**  
(*Phragmites australis subsp. australis*)  
Photo by: Michael Irvine

These plants impact biodiversity by out-competing native species for space, sunlight, and nutrients. They can also have impacts on road and driver safety by physically blocking intersection sightlines, and in the case of invasive *Phragmites* and *Miscanthus*, may fuel intense grass fires if ignited, which can damage utility stations and hydro lines.

**The harmful effects of invasive species include:**

- Physical and structural damage to infrastructure
- Human health hazards (i.e. giant hogweed and wild parsnip exposure)
- Delays and increased cost in construction activities
- Environmental damage (i.e. erosion)
- Aesthetic degradation
- Loss of biodiversity
- Reduced property values
- Loss of productivity in woodlots and agriculture



# Why Cleaning Vehicles and Equipment is Important

Passenger and recreational vehicles as well as heavy machinery are major vectors for spreading terrestrial invasive species into new areas.

Preventing the spread of invasive species has proven to be considerably more cost effective than controlling established populations. The spread of invasive species through unintentional introduction can be minimized significantly by the diligent cleaning of vehicles and equipment when leaving one site and moving to the next. In the case of large properties, cleaning before moving to a new site is recommended, even if it is within the same property.

This guide has been developed for the construction, agriculture, forestry, and other land management industries, to provide equipment operators and practitioners with tools and techniques to identify and prevent the unintentional introduction of invasive species. It establishes a standard for cleaning vehicles and equipment and provides a guide where current codes of practice, industry standards or other environmental management plans are not already in place.

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## Passenger and recreational vehicles include:

- 2WD and 4WD cars
- 2WD and 4WD trucks
- All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's)
- Motorbikes
- Snowmobiles

## Heavy machinery includes:

- Trucks
- Tractors
- Mowers
- Slashers
- Trailers
- Backhoes
- Graders
- Dozers
- Excavators
- Skidders
- Loaders
- Water Tankers and Trucks



**Dog-strangling Vine plants attached to ATV.**

Photo by: Francine Macdonald



**Plant material attached to bobcat.**

Photo by: TH9 Outdoor Services

# Impacts of Invasive Species on Industry

## Construction

In the UK, Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum* or *Fallopia japonica*) is classified as a hazardous material. When construction occurs in established Japanese Knotweed stands workers sift the soil to remove root fragments and institute treatment plans to ensure that the Knotweed does not re-sprout, as it can damage housing foundations by growing through concrete and asphalt. The contractors must also thoroughly clean their equipment, and dispose of the contaminated soil at biohazard waste sites. While we do not have these requirements in Ontario, Japanese Knotweed is present here.

Invasive plant species can also increase site preparation and weed control costs, and reduce property values. For example, in Vermont the presence of the aquatic invasive plant Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) depressed shoreline residence property value by as much as 16.4% (Zhang and Boyle, 2010).

## Forestry/Agriculture

Invasive plant species which become established in forests will out-compete native species and prevent forest re-generation after logging or natural disturbance. Dog-strangling Vine (*Cynanchum rossicum*) is of particular concern in conifer plantations. This species thrives in the filtered light and open soils of mature plantations, and suppresses seedling establishment of native hardwoods. If its invasion continues, very few juvenile trees will survive to fill the shrinking canopy of over-mature pines. Reforestation sites are also susceptible; the thick mats of vegetation and aggressive competition from Dog-strangling Vine decrease available planting space and increase costs as more mature vegetation needs to be planted in order to ensure the new vegetation can outcompete the invasive plant. As a result, expensive control programs are often required.

## Land Management (Trail Use/Maintenance)

Recreational trail use and the maintenance of trails can facilitate the transport of invasive plant material and seeds, and create open and disturbed sites that are prime locations for the establishment of invasive species. Studies have proven that trails act as corridors which assist in the spread of invasive plant species. Humans, their pets, and vehicles such as ATV's can be vectors of invasion along trails because seeds and plant pieces can be carried on equipment and clothing. In addition, frequent trampling along trails alters soil properties, limits the growth of some native species, and creates conditions that may favour the growth of non-native species (Kuss et al. 1985; Marion et al. 1985; Yorks et al. 1997).

## Roadsides/Utilities

Invasive species can increase the cost of roadside and utility maintenance by requiring additional maintenance and control efforts. The presence of invasive species can also provide a safety hazard. In the case of Phragmites and Miscanthus (invasive grass species), along with interrupting sight lines, the dead stalks which remain standing each autumn also provide combustible material. Fires in these stands burn intensely, and can damage utilities and hydro lines. Phragmites along roadsides is generally assumed to be spread through the transport and burial of rhizome fragments through ditching, ploughing, and other human activities that transport rhizomes on machinery. Studies have shown that vehicles and road-fill operations can transport invasive plant seeds into uninfested areas, and road construction and maintenance operations provide optimal disturbed sites for seed germination and seedling establishment (Schmidt 1989; Lonsdale & Lane 1994; Greenberg et al. 1997; Trombulak & Frissell 2000).

# Steps to Prevent the Unintentional Introduction of Invasive Species from Equipment

Inspection and cleaning of all machinery and equipment should be performed in accordance with the procedures, checklists and diagrams provided in this protocol.

When visiting more than one site, always schedule work in the sites that are the least disturbed and free of known invasive species first, and visit sites with known invasive species infestations last. This will greatly reduce the risk of transferring plants to new locations.

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## When to Inspect

### Inspection should be done before:

- Moving vehicles out of a local area of operation
- Moving machinery between properties or sites within the same property where invasive species may be present in one area, and not in another
- Using machinery along roadsides, in ditches, and along watercourses
- Vehicles using unformed dirt roads, trails or off road conditions
- Using machinery to transport soil and quarry materials
- Visiting remote areas where access by vehicles is limited

### Inspection should be done after:

- Operating in areas known to have terrestrial invasive plants or are in high risk areas (i.e. recently disturbed areas near known invaded areas)
- Transporting material (i.e. soil) that is known to contain, or has the potential to contain, invasive species
- Operating in an area or transporting material that you are uncertain contain invasive species
- In the event of rain. If mud contains seeds, they can travel indefinitely until it rains or the road surface is wet, allowing for long distance transport. This may result in transporting seeds to areas where those species did not previously exist

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## How to Inspect

- Inspect the vehicle thoroughly inside and out for where dirt, plant material and seeds may be lodged or adhering to interior and exterior surfaces.
- Remove any guards, covers or plates that are easy to remove.
- Attention should be paid to the underside of the vehicle, radiators, spare tires, foot wells and bumper bars.

If clods of dirt, seed or other plant material are found, removal should take place immediately, using the techniques outlined below.



## When to Clean

Vehicles and heavy equipment that stay on formed and sealed roads have a low risk of spreading invasive species. Cleaning is only required when inspection identifies visible dirt clods and plant material or when moving from one area to another.

Depending on the invasive species present, vehicles may need to be cleaned even when deep snow is present. Invasive *Phragmites*, for example, can still be spread, even in packed snow because the seed heads are usually above the surface of the snow. Other plants, such as dog-strangling vine, will be contained beneath deep snow.

*\*Regular inspection of vehicles and machinery will identify if any soil or plant material has been collected on or in vehicles and machinery.*

## Where to Clean

Clean the vehicle/equipment in an area where contamination and seed spread is not possible (or limited). The site should be:

- Ideally, mud free, gravel covered or a hard surface. If this option is not available, choose a well maintained (i.e. regularly mowed) grassy area.
- Gently sloping to assist in draining water and material away from the vehicle or equipment. Care should be taken to ensure that localized erosion will not be created, and that water runs back into the area where contamination occurred.
- At least 30m away from any watercourse, water body and natural vegetation.
- Large enough to allow for adequate movement of larger vehicles and equipment.

*\*Safely locate the vehicle and equipment away from any hazards. If mechanized, ensure engine is off and the vehicle or equipment is immobilized.*

## How to Clean Inside

Clean the interior of the vehicle by sweeping, vacuuming or using a compressed air device. Particular attention should be paid to the floor, foot wells, pedals, seats, and under the seats.

## How to Clean Outside

Knock off all large clods of dirt. Use a pry bar or other device if necessary.

Identify areas that may require cleaning with compressed air rather than water such as radiators and grills. Clean these areas first prior to using water.

Clean the vehicle with a high pressure hose in combination with a stiff brush and/or pry bar to further assist the removal of dirt clods.

Start cleaning from the top of the vehicle and work down to the bottom.

Emphasis should be placed on the undersides, wheels, wheel arches, guards, chassis, engine bays, radiator, grills, and other attachments.

When the cleaning is finished avoid driving through the waste water when removing the vehicle or equipment from the cleaning site.

For equipment such as water trucks that may be exposed to aquatic invasive species, trucks should be disinfected with bleach solution before conducting work in a new area. For further information please refer to the Invading Species Awareness Program's Technical Guidelines listed under Contacts and Resources.



**Hosing down a vehicle in Queensland, Australia**

Photo by: TH9 Outdoor Services

# Final Inspection Checklist

**Conduct a final inspection to ensure the following general clean standard has been achieved:**

- No clods of dirt should be visible after wash down.
- Radiators, grills, and the interiors of vehicles should be free of accumulations of seed, soil, mud and plant material parts including seeds, roots, flowers, fruit, and or stems.

Diagrams have been provided to assist in quickly identifying key areas to inspect and clean on a variety of vehicles associated with the targeted industries. These can be used in combination with vehicle checklists to ensure all areas of the vehicles have been inspected and cleaned.

## Equipment Required

- A pump and high pressure hose OR high pressure water unit
- Minimum water pressure for vehicle cleaning should be at least 90 pounds per square inch. Water can be supplied as high volume/low pressure or low volume/high pressure (NOAA Fisheries Service).
- Air compressor and blower OR vacuum
- Shovel
- Pry bar
- Stiff brush or broom



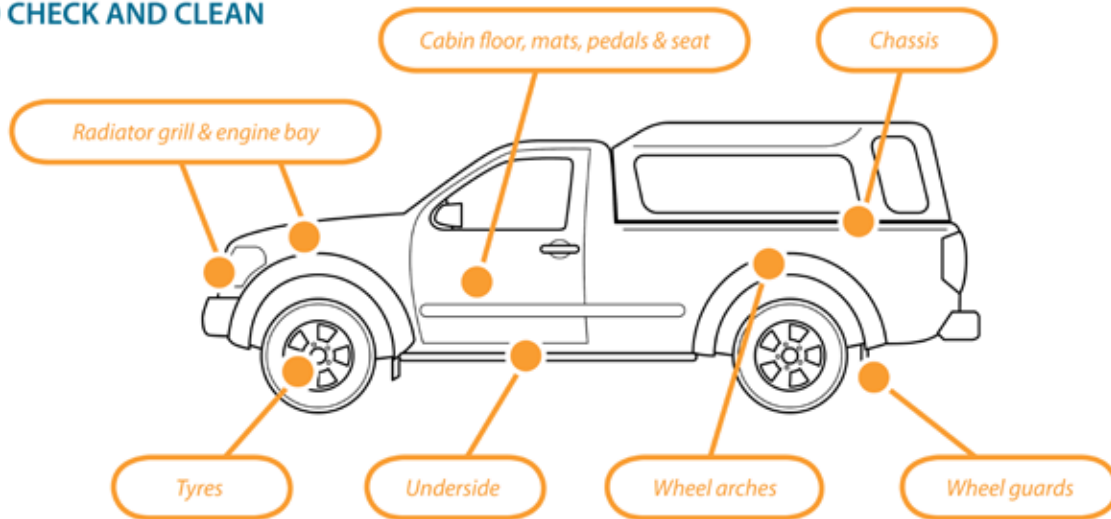
**Cleaning station at construction site.**

Photo by: Mark Heaton, OMNR

# Inspection and Cleaning Diagrams and Checklists

## 2WD and 4WD Vehicles

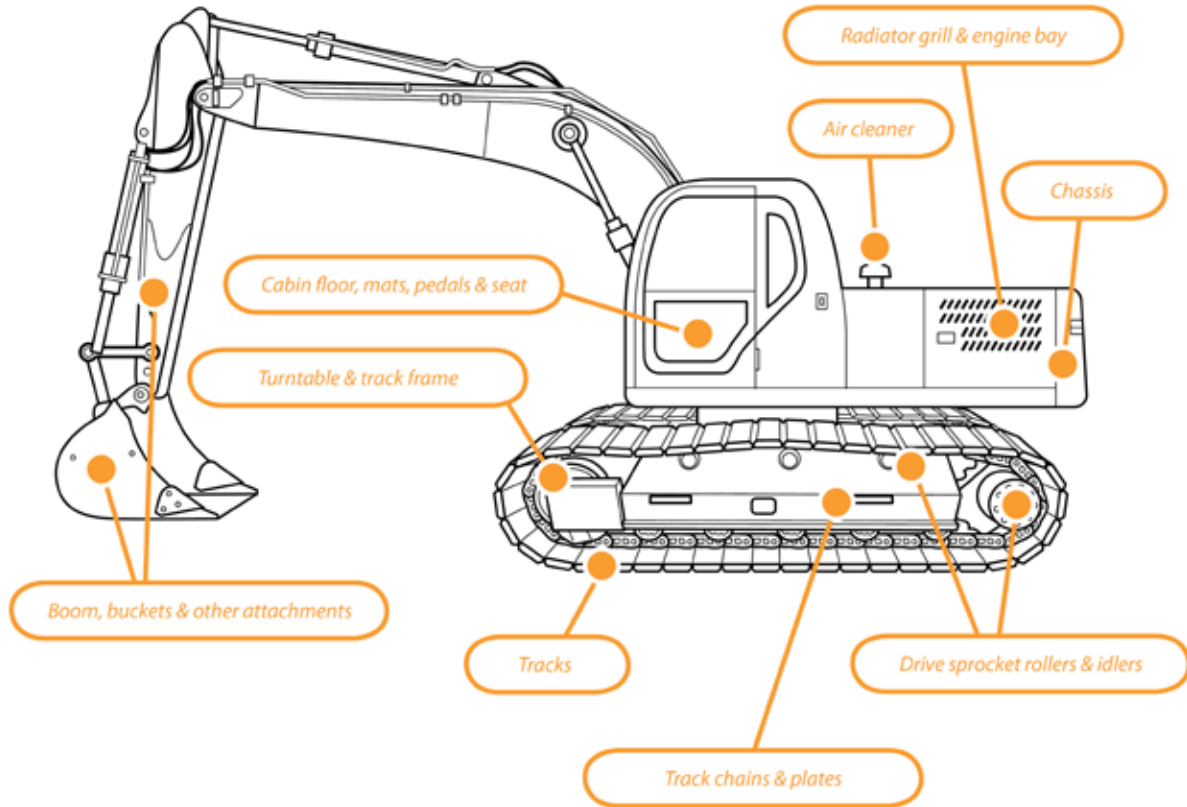
### 4WD VEHICLE WITH KEY SPOTS TO CHECK AND CLEAN



		✓
<b>Cabin</b>	Floor, mats, pedals, seats	
<b>Engine</b>	Radiators, engine bay, grill	
<b>Body</b>	Underside, chassis, crevices, ledges, bumper bars	
<b>Wheels</b>	All wheels (including spare), wheel arches, guards	
<b>Tray</b>	Floor, canopy (if included)	

# Excavator

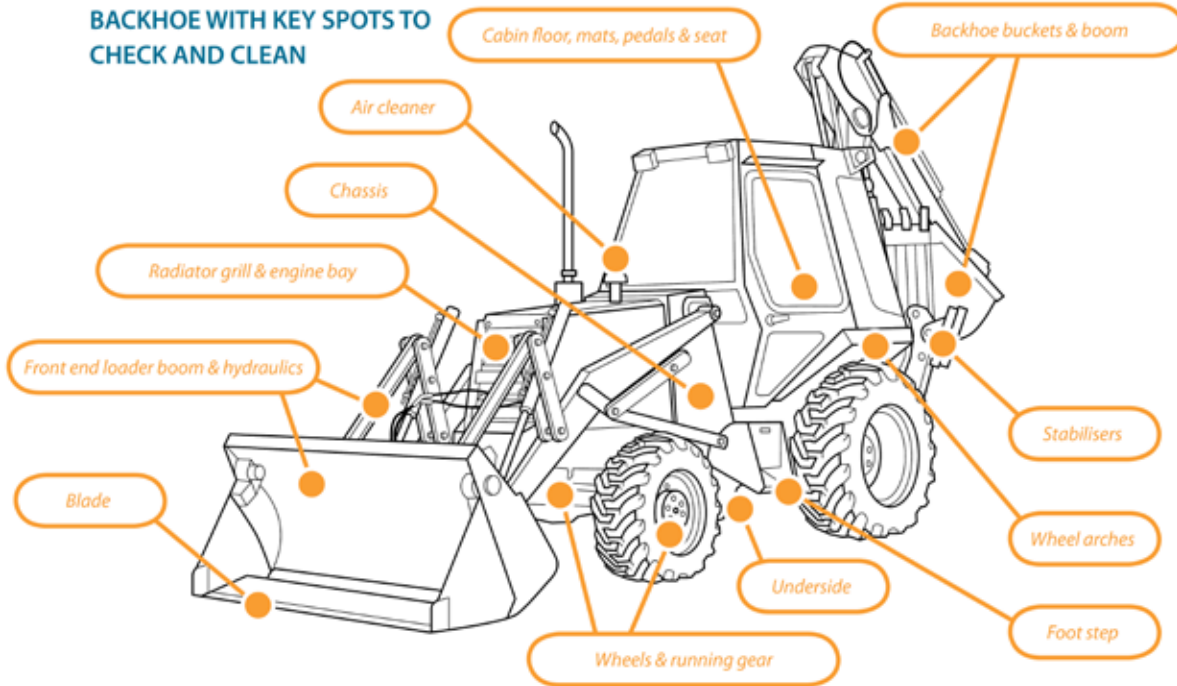
## EXCAVATOR WITH KEY SPOTS TO CHECK AND CLEAN



		✓
<b>Cabin</b>	Floor, mats, pedals, seats	
<b>Engine</b>	Radiators, engine bay, grill, air cleaner	
<b>Tracks</b>	Tracks, track frame, drive sprocket rollers, idlers	
<b>Body Plates</b>	Plates of cabin	
<b>Body</b>	Ledges, channels	
<b>Bucket</b>		
<b>Booms</b>		
<b>Turret Pivot</b>		

# Backhoe

## BACKHOE WITH KEY SPOTS TO CHECK AND CLEAN

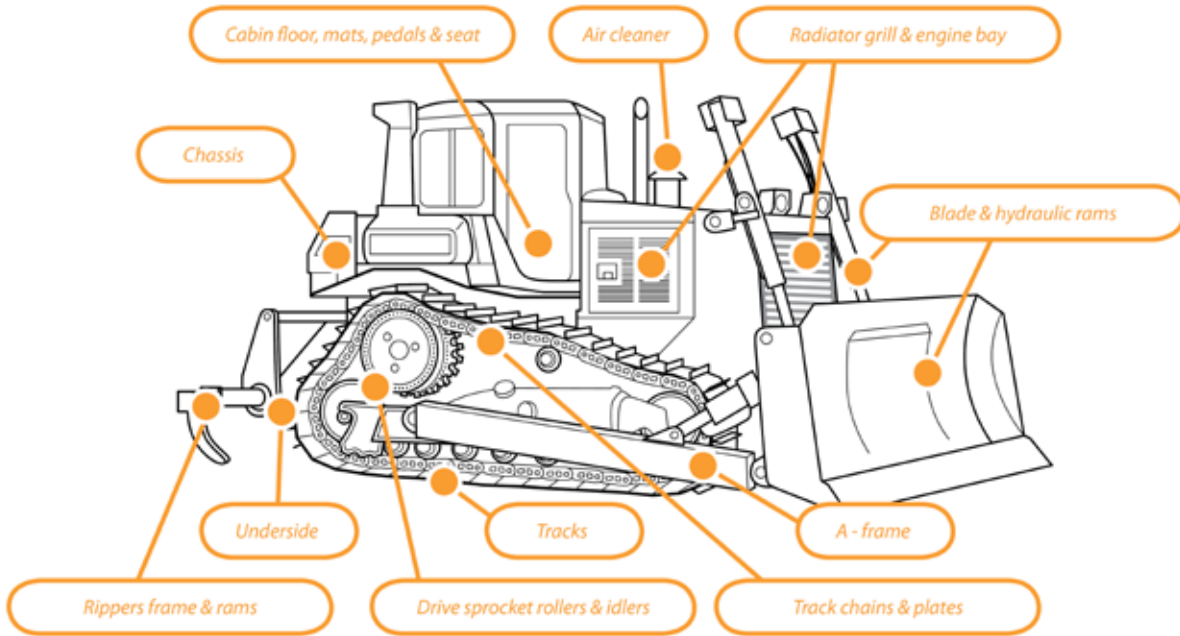


		✓
<b>Cabin</b>	Floor, mats, pedals, seats, foot step	
<b>Engine</b>	Radiators, engine bay, grill, air cleaner	
<b>Wheels</b>	All wheels (including spare), wheel arches, guards	
<b>Front end loader</b>	Blade, hydraulics, booms	
<b>Backhoe</b>	Buckets, boom, hydraulics, stabilisers	



# Bulldozer

## BULLDOZER WITH KEY SPOTS TO CHECK AND CLEAN



		✓
<b>Cabin</b>	Floor, mats, pedals, seats	
<b>Engine</b>	Radiators, engine bay, grill, air cleaner	
<b>Tracks</b>	Tracks, track frame, drive sprocket rollers, idlers	
<b>Body Plates</b>	Belly plates, rear plates	
<b>Body</b>	Ledges, channels	
<b>Blade</b>	Pivot points, hydraulic rams, a-frame	
<b>Ripper</b>	Ripper frame, ripper points	

# Contacts and Resources

Ontario Invasive Species Strategic Plan 2012. Government of Ontario. Online, accessed May 8, 2012.

[http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@biodiversity/documents/document/stdprod\\_097634.pdf](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@biodiversity/documents/document/stdprod_097634.pdf)

Invasive Species Management for Infrastructure Managers and the Construction Industry 2008. Wade, M. Booy, O. and White, V. Online, accessed April 27, 2012.

[http://www.ciria.org/service/Web\\_Site/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=Web\\_Site&ContentID=9001](http://www.ciria.org/service/Web_Site/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=Web_Site&ContentID=9001)

T.I.P.S (Targeted Invasive Plant Solutions) Highway Operations. British Columbia Invasive Species Council. Online, accessed May 8, 2012.

[http://www.bcinvvasiveplants.com/iscbc/publications/TIPS/Highways\\_Operations\\_TIPS.pdf](http://www.bcinvvasiveplants.com/iscbc/publications/TIPS/Highways_Operations_TIPS.pdf)

Invading Species Awareness Program Workshop Manual: Aquatic Invasive Species: An Introduction to Identification, Collection and Reporting of Aquatic Invasive Species in Ontario Waters (includes information on decontaminating equipment).

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/download/publications/manuals/WorkshopManual.pdf>

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## Reporting Invasive Species

To report invasive species, or view maps of existing records, visit the Invading Species Awareness Program website [www.invadingspecies.com/report/](http://www.invadingspecies.com/report/) or [www.eddmaps.org/Ontario](http://www.eddmaps.org/Ontario).

Or call the OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program Hotline at **1-800-563-7711**.

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### Clean Equipment Protocol Working Group:

Diana Shermet, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority; Paula Berketo, Ontario Ministry of Transportation; Travis Cameron, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Jennifer Hoare, Ontario Parks; Michael Irvine, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Alison Kirkpatrick, OFAH/MNR Invading Species Awareness Program; Erika Weisz, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources; Amanda Chad, Ontario Power Generation; Nancy Vidler, Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group; Nigel Buffone, Du Pont Canada Company; Ewa Bednarczuk, Lower Trent Conservation Authority

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### More Information:

Ontario Invasive Plant Council: [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca)

# Appendix A: Identification of Invasive Plants Found in Ontario

- **Common Buckthorn** (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and **Glossy Buckthorn** (*Frangula alnus*)
- **Dog-strangling Vine** (*Cynanchum rossicum*)
- **Garlic Mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*)
- **Japanese Knotweed** (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- **Phragmites or Common Reed** (*Phragmites australis subsp. australis*)
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

## common & glossy buckthorn

(*Rhamnus cathartica* & *R. frangula*)



**Plant type:** Shrub/small tree

**Arrangement:** Common buckthorn are sub-opposite (almost opposite). Glossy buckthorn are alternate.

**Leaf:** The common buckthorn leaf is egg shaped, edge of the leaf is “pebbled” (small rounded teeth). Veins converging toward leaf top. The glossy buckthorn leaf is more slender (tear drop shaped) and smooth margined.

**Bark:** Smooth, young bark with prominent raised patches or lenticels; rough texture and peeling bark when mature.

**Seed/Flowers:** Flowers are green-yellowish, small and inconspicuous. Green berries becoming purplish/black in late summer, berry > 1 cm in diameter.

**Buds/Twigs:** Common buckthorn has thorn-like tip on many twigs. Glossy buckthorn buds have no bud scales and lack thorny tips to twigs.

**Habitat:** Various - forest, thickets, meadows, dry to moist soils.

**Similar native species:** Native dogwoods, which lack the thorny “tip”. Native dogwoods are truly opposite in arrangement of twigs; only alternate leaved (pagoda) dogwood has alternate branching.



## dog-strangling vine

(*Cynanchum rossicum* & *C. nigrum*)



**Plant type:** Herb, twining vine

**Arrangement:** Opposite

**Leaf:** Lance shaped, smooth margin (edge)

**Bark:** n/a

**Seed/Flowers:** Bean shaped seed pod with seeds attached to downy 'umbrellas'. Flowers - pink (*C. rossicum*) or purple (*C. nigrum*) with five petals.

**Buds/Twigs:** n/a

**Habitat:** Dry to moist soils; more dominant in meadows and woodland edges.

**Similar native species:** Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata* spp.), is an upright plant, typically found in wetland habitats.

## garlic mustard

(*Alliaria petiolata*)



**Plant type:** Herb

**Arrangement:** Alternate

**Leaf:** Saw tooth like edge, elongated heart shape. Garlic/onion smell when crushed. Leaves are kidney shaped with prominent veins.

**Bark:** n/a

**Seed/Flowers:** Cluster of small white flowers with four petals. Small black < 1 mm rounded seed found in elongated 'tube-like' seed pods (similar to a bean pod).

**Buds/Twigs:** n/a

**Habitat:** Various – dry to moist soils, in all habitat types, less often in meadows.

**Similar native species:** n/a



## japanese knotweed

(*Polygonum cuspidatum*)



**Plant type:** Herb, 2 - 4 m in height.

**Arrangement:** Alternate

**Leaf:** Tear drop shaped, sharp pointed, dark green, flattened at base.

**Bark:** n/a

**Seed/Flowers:** Flowering stalk of many small greenish-white flowers.

**Buds/Twigs:** Large plant with a 'bamboo-like' stem. Stem light green maturing to tan colour.

**Habitat:** Moist to wet soils found in wetlands, water-courses and roadside ditches.

**Similar native species:** None.

## common reed

(*Phragmites australis*)



**Plant type:** Grass

**Arrangement:** Alternate

**Leaf:** Broad leaf > 1 cm wide.

**Bark:** n/a

**Seed/Flowers:** Dense cascading 'broom-like' flower head. 'Cottony' in appearance when mature.

**Buds/Twigs:** Stems rough and ridged, ligule a densely hairy band. Mature plants > 3 m tall.

**Habitat:** Moist to wet soils. Found in wetlands, water-courses and road side ditches.

**Similar native species:** Species of mannagrass (*Glyceria* sp) including tall northern, eastern and rattlesnake grass. A native common reed exists but has a smooth stem and the ligule is not hairy. It is also quite rare.



# giant hogweed

(*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)



**Plant type:** Herb. Mature plants can be over 3m tall.

**Arrangement:** Alternate

**Leaf:** Lobed leaf 1-2 m wide, lobes sharp-pointed.

**Bark:** n/a

**Seed/Flowers:** Small, white flowers in a large umbrella-shaped cluster, .75 m wide.

**Buds/Twigs:** Hairy stem with purple spots.

**Habitat:** Fresh to wet soils in forests, swamps, meadows, marshes.

**Similar native species:** Cow parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*) – has smaller flowers, no purple spots on stems. Angelica (*Angelica atropurpurea*) has a rounded-topped flower cluster and leaves divided into many leaflets.

***Do not touch this plant because it is poisonous. If you do, wash your skin immediately in cool soapy water and do not expose the area to sunlight.***

***Seek professional advice before removing.***

## Identification of Invasive Plants found in Ontario Photos by:

Credit Valley Conservation, Greg Bales, Ken Towle, Patrick Hodge,  
Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Francine Macdonald, Matt Smith

