



Biodiversity on the road



What exactly is an exotic species?

An exotic species refers to a species that has been introduced into an area where it does not occur naturally. However, not all exotic species are necessarily invasive.

A species is deemed invasive when it proliferates excessively under ideal conditions, in the absence of natural control, causing harm to the local environment and Biodiversity.

Why should we be concerned?

Invasive plants pose a threat to indigenous plants and the animals whose survival depends on the latter. The harmful effects of certain exotic plants include the soil and groundwater acidification; competition with indigenous species for water, space and nutrients; uncontrolled plant growth, resulting in extensive shaded areas (which prevent the growth of other species); and the risk of fire. Once installed, invasive species are very difficult to eradicate, owing to their great resilience and extremely effective reproductive strategies, namely the production of several thousands of seeds per square meter, high dispersal ability and vegetative propagation (when a new plant grows from a fragment or cutting of the parent plant). Additionally, their growth is favoured by certain disturbances, namely fires or clearing of vegetation.

More than 200 invasive plant species are currently found in Portugal, of which some of the most problematic are already part of typical Portuguese landscapes, especially in urban areas. The Australian blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), the sallow wattle (*Acacia longifolia*), the mimosa (*Acacia dealbata*), the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), the giant cane (*Arundo donax*), the Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and the pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) figure amongst the species we should be careful not to spread.



How to control invasive plants?

Invasive plant control is a complex process, as it depends on the species and time of the year.

Prevention is undoubtedly the best way to control the growth of invasive plants. Knowing how to recognise invasive species is extremely important for preventing their marketing and use for ornamental purposes.

When removing these plants, it is extremely important to ensure that no plant material is left. However, the planting and maintenance of indigenous species is still the most effective measure.

Exotic species at Ascendi

Ascendi manages its green areas such as to foster plant Biodiversity. We have joined the [Stop Pampas](#) initiative and participated in the [Invasive Species Week](#) (21-29 May 2022).

We count on you to help us in our fight for Biodiversity!



Nature thanks you!