

The Code of Conduct on invasive plants in Belgium

Plant Different

September 2011



Document realized by M. Halford, C. Mathys, L. Heemers, S. Vanderhoeven, E. Branquart & G. Mahy, in collaboration with H. van Gossum, O. Beck, C. Collin, S. Wallens and D. Rebella.

This Code was developed within the frame of the AlterIAS LIFE project coordinated by the Biodiversity & Landscape Unit (University of Liège Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, Belgium)



In collaboration with:



Le Centre Technique Horticole de Gembloux
The Horticultural Technical Center of Gembloux



Het Proefcentrum voor Sierteelt
Research center for ornamental plants



The Federal Public Service
Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment



Biodiversity.be

The Belgian Biodiversity Platform
and the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species

Supported and co-financed by:



AlterIAS - Alternatives for invasive plants - is a communication project dedicated to invasive plants and prevention in the ornamental horticulture sector (<http://www.alterias.be>). *AlterIAS* [2010 – 2013] is supported and co-financed by the LIFE + program of the European Commission and by regional and federal administrations responsible for environment in Belgium (Agentschap voor Natuur en Bos, Bruxelles Environnement – Leefmilieu Brussel, Federal Public Service, Service Public de Wallonie).

"The spread of invasive plants is one of the most challenging ecological problems in the 21st Century".

Extract translated from *Critical Reviews in Plant Sciences*, 2004

Invasive plants are exotic species introduced by man deliberately or accidentally outside their natural range, which establish in natural habitats and expand outcompeting native flora and fauna. In Europe and all around the world, invasive plants are considered as a threat for environment, causing biodiversity loss, ecosystems degradation and sometimes public health problems with high economic consequences for society. Most of them are ornamentals introduced and cultivated for horticultural use. Once planted, they may escape out of private and public gardens, botanical gardens or cultivation areas, colonize natural habitats and spread over landscapes. Invasive plants represent a small proportion of the total number of ornamental plants available, but impacts for biodiversity can be high. Reducing voluntary introductions of those species in gardens, private ponds, green areas or along roads, railways and riverbanks is of crucial interest for preventing plant invasions in nature.

Codes of conduct are voluntary instruments which aim at reducing introductions of invasive plants. It is a self-regulation tool based on adoption of preventive measures helping to avoid their spread. Such a tool can be adopted by anyone concerned by the production and the use of ornamental plants. Codes of conduct are recommended by the Council of Europe, the Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) and the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO). Similar codes or initiatives are already under application or in preparation at an international, national or regional level in several countries around the world like The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia or the United States.

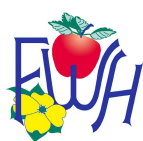


Logo used for the Code of conduct on invasive plants in Belgium (French and Dutch version)

HOW WAS THIS CODE PREPARED ?

This Code has been prepared on the AlterIAS project initiative, in close collaboration with horticulture professionals from the green sector and horticultural federations in Belgium. Measures proposed were developed through round table discussions and consultations with a representative sample of the horticultural profession (green sector), scientists involved in invasion biology and members of the AlterIAS team. The content has been approved by main horticultural federations and associations active throughout the country (Wallonia, Flanders, Brussels).

Two target groups of horticulture professionals were consulted: (1) **ornamental plant producers & sellers** (nurseries and garden centers) and (2) **ornamental plant users** (public green managers, landscape architects, garden contractors and representatives of botanical gardens).



La Fédération Horticole
Wallonne (FWH)



Het Algemeen Berbond voor
Belgische Siertelers en
Groenvoorzieners (AVBS)



L'Association pour les
Espaces Verts Communaux
(APEC)



Vereniging voor Openbaar Groen
(VVOG)



La Fédération Belge des
Entrepreneurs Paysagistes
(BFG-FBEP)



L'Association Bruxelloise des
Gestionnaires de Plantations/
Brusselse Vereniging voor
Plantsoen Beheerders (ABGP/BVPB)



L'Association Belge des
Architectes de Jardins et
Paysagistes
(ABAJP-BVTL)



Belgische Tuincentra Vereniging
(BTV)

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE CODE ?

A Code of conduct is a **voluntary instrument**. Everyone is free to subscribe. This Code is prepared for horticulture professionals from the green sector, called « partner » in the present document. Once the code filled, the partner commits himself to respect the content, described hereafter in several articles. First, please read the code with attention. If you agree with the content and decide to endorse it, simply fill it and send it back to one of the contact point mentioned below. Then you must register on the AlterIAS website (<http://www.alterias.be>), section Code of conduct - become a partner.

Contact points	
In French	In Dutch
<p>HALFORD Mathieu Université de Liège Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech Unité Biodiversité & Paysage Passage des Déportés, 2 5030 Gembloux Fax: 081/61.48.17</p>	<p>HEEMERS Leen Proefcentrum voor Sierteelt (PCS) Schaessestraat, 18 9070 Destelbergen Fax: 09/353.94.95</p>
Or by Email: info@alterias.be	

WHICH BENEFIT FOR THE HORTICULTURAL SECTOR ?

- 1. Preserving environment.** The code of conduct is of nature conservation purpose. Reducing introductions of invasive plants in gardens, ponds, green areas or along roads contributes to preserve natural habitats from plant invasions. By subscribing to the code, nursery professionals engage in a pro_active manner to protect biodiversity and educate consumers in choosing harmless plants for environment.
- 2. Benefit from the positive publicity addressed to the public and gardeners.** Communication campaigns shall be conducted in order to (1) highlight the involvement of nursery professionals in the code for protecting biodiversity; (2) encourage public to provide plants or services at partners involved in the Code. Varied communication channels (media, articles in press, website, etc.) shall be used to promote the 'environmentally safe' attitude of the green sector concerning the invasive plants issue. By this way, the sector demonstrates his will and ability to face an environmental issue through self-regulation.
- 3. Promote alternative plants and anticipate a change of attitude from consumers.** General public is more and more aware about the invasive plants issue. A progressive change in the demand for non invasive plants (alternative plants) is expected in the future. Nursery professionals (producers, sellers) and other green sector professionals (landscape architects, garden contractors) involved in the code shall be better prepared for such a change. They will be referenced as favored contact points for providing alternative plants or advice about responsible plant choices.
- 4. Anticipate possible development of legislations on the use of invasive plants.** Different regulation initiatives are under application or in preparation at a regional, federal or European level. Green sector professionals involved in the code shall not be affected (or less affected) by such regulations.

CONTENT OF THE CODE

General statement:

1. Exotic plants (or alien plants) are species introduced by human activities outside their natural range, considered as non-native in Belgium. Most exotic plants pose no problem for environment and are useful in varied sector of our society (agriculture, forestry, horticulture, etc.). Only a small proportion has become invasive and is detrimental to biodiversity, public health and economics.
2. In Belgium, scientists gathered within the Belgian Forum on Invasive Species have assessed and classified invasive species in a black list, a watch list and an alarm list system available on <http://ias.biodiversity.be>. The list aims at helping decision makers to prioritize actions in the field. It is not a legally binding instrument. The list system is updated on a periodic basis.
3. Reducing introductions of invasive plants in gardens, ponds, green areas or along roads, railways and riverbanks contributes to prevent plant invasions in nature. Prevention is a complementary approach to control actions targeting invasive plants established in nature.
4. The code of conduct is addressed at the green sector (ornamental horticulture). It aims at promoting a change of attitude of professionals and gardeners in order to reduce the spread of invasive ornamental plants through preventive measures.

5. The code of conduct is of nature conservation purpose: it helps at preserving biodiversity and natural habitats in Belgium. It also contributes to reduce impacts of invasive plants on economy and public health.
6. The code of conduct is a self-regulation tool complementary to existing legislations on nature conservation, invasive alien species and green waste management (deposit of garden waste in the wild is an illegal act and deposit of garden waste containing fragments of invasive plants contributes to the spread of those species).
7. Communication and awareness of general public is part of the code of conduct approach, requiring information to both horticulture professionals and consumers. Therefore specific communication tools (folders, posters, logo) shall be provided to partners registered in the website (<http://www.alterias.be>). An awareness campaign shall be implemented by the AlterIAS Life team in order to promote the code and highlight efforts from the ornamental sector to protect environment.

Article 1 Scope

This code is dedicated to actors of the horticulture sector, meaning everyone involved in the production and the use of ornamental plants. This includes nursery men (producers or sellers of terrestrial or aquatic plants), sellers in garden centers, aquarists, public green managers (in cities, municipalities or other public departments), landscape architects, garden contractors, horticulture professionals working in botanical gardens or arboreta.

Article 2 Geographical area

This Code is applicable at the Belgian territory and concerns the national horticultural market. Export trade is not concerned with this code, but each partner commits himself to be in line with national initiatives on invasive plants in export areas (i.e. legislations, codes of conduct or other initiatives concerning the trade of invasive plants in other countries). This information is available on the AlterIAS website.

Article 3 Engagement

The partner commits himself to adopt the following measures:

1. Keep informed about the list of invasive plants in Belgium

Know the list of invasive plants (see <http://ias.biodiversity.be>) and know the plants you are growing (be sure about the identity of species, with special attention to names and synonyms of invasive plants). Take into account AlterIAS recommendations available in the AlterIAS website in order to avoid the spread of invasive plants (i.e. recommendations about garden waste management, plantations, list of names and synonyms of invasive plants, etc.).

2. Stop planting and/or selling selected invasive plants in Belgium

This measure concerns species mentioned in **annex I**, including all synonyms, cultivars or varieties directly related to those species. This list of species, called the “consensus list”, has been approved unanimously through the sector consultation organized for preparing the code. The consensus list includes a restricted number of species with a low or medium economic

value, mostly considered as highly invasive in Belgium. Once signed, no plant of the list selected can be ordered, produced, sold, or planted in Belgium. However existing stocks before signing the Code may be used (as quick as possible) but cannot be refurnished (except for export, see article 2). If possible, when catalogues are available, signal the withdrawing of invasive plants from catalogues by keeping the name and crossing it out with the mention "invasive plant in Belgium".

3. Disseminate information about invasive plants to customers or citizens

Distribute folders¹ developed in the framework of AlterIAS project and display clearly the poster¹ mentioning your involvement in the code. If possible, display the code of conduct logo¹ clearly in your website (homepage) OR put a link to the AlterIAS project with the following comment: *"To protect our biodiversity, we are involved in the Code of conduct on invasive plants. For more information, see <http://www.alterias.be>".*

Communicate about other invasive plants in Belgium (**annex II**). Different options are possible: (1) list those species on your website and/or in your catalogue with the following message (associated with a specific pictogram¹):



"Ask for advice to nursery professionals before planting species included in this list. They may become invasive in some natural habitats or in specific conditions, including in parks and gardens. Use them carefully. Alternative plants can be proposed instead of these species".

and/or (2) indicate a specific pictogram in catalogues next to the name of each species included in this list, with the above mentioned message as legend for the pictogram; and/or (3) distribute a paper with the list and the same message¹; and/or (4) program an automatic message (pictogram or short message) in receipts related to species included in the list.

4. Communicate and promote the use of non invasive alternative plants

Make alternative plants available instead of invasive plants and promote them. Alternatives must be non invasive plants. The partner commits himself to take into account AlterIAS recommendations about alternative plants (see AlterIAS website).

5. Take part in early detection

Inform scientists about new potential invasive plants observed in cultivation, gardens and green areas. New potential invasive plants are exotic species not included in the list but observed to spread rapidly, to reseed or escape easily in nature. When such species are observed, please fill in and send the factsheet available in **annex III**.

Article 4 Period of application & revision

Once filled, the code is under application until resignation (see article 6). The lists can be revised every 3 years, based on the evolution of knowledge of species. The revised version of the lists shall be sent to each partner in order to be approved for continuation.

Article 5 Monitoring

Each partner is responsible for respecting his engagement. The AlterIAS team can be contacted for providing help or advice during the course of the project.

¹ All communication tools related to the code (logo, poster, folder, picto, etc.) are available on the AlterIAS website. Paper versions will be provided to partners registered in the database.

Article 6 Resignation

Each partner is free to resign his engagement at any time, by resigning on the AlterIAS website. Once resigned, the AlterIAS logo and posters cannot be used anymore.

Article 7 Subscription

The partner :

Name(s) of the responsible(s)		
Name of institution*/firm/organization/ municipality		
Address		
Email and phone	Email	
	Phone	
Date		
Signature(s) (optional)		

*** Important note:** If you represent a federation or an association, you can also subscribe to the code, which means that you engage to promote the code to your members and invite them to endorse it individually.

Once filled, the code must be sent back by mail, fax or post to the **contact point** (see page 2). The partner must register on the AlterIAS website (<http://www.alterias.be> – section Code of conduct, become a partner).

**ANNEX I The list of invasive plants to withdraw from sales or plantations
("consensus list")**

Scientific names	
Terrestrial plants	Aquatic plants
<i>Ailanthus altissima</i> <i>Aster lanceolatus</i> <i>Aster x salignus</i> <i>Baccharis halimifolia</i> <i>Bidens frondosa</i> <i>Cyperus eragrostis</i> <i>Duchesnea indica</i> <i>Fallopia japonica</i> <i>Fallopia sachalinensis</i> <i>Fallopia x bohemica</i> <i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i> <i>Hyacinthoides hispanica</i> <i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> <i>Impatiens parviflora</i> <i>Mimulus guttatus</i> <i>Persicaria wallichii</i> <i>Prunus serotina</i> <i>Senecio inaequidens</i> <i>Solidago canadensis</i> <i>Solidago gigantea</i>	<i>Crassula helmsii</i> <i>Egeria densa</i> <i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i> <i>Lagarosiphon major</i> <i>Ludwigia grandiflora</i> <i>Ludwigia peploides</i> <i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i> <i>Myriophyllum heterophyllum</i>

List defined on February 2011

All synonyms, cultivars and varieties directly derived from those species are also included in this list.

ANNEX II List of other invasive plants in Belgium

Scientific names	
Terrestrial plants	Aquatic plants
<i>Acer negundo</i> <i>Acer rufrinerve</i> <i>Amelanchier lamarckii</i> <i>Aster novi-belgii</i> <i>Buddleja davidii</i> <i>Cornus sericea</i> <i>Cotoneaster horizontalis</i> <i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i> <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> <i>Helianthus tuberosus</i> <i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i> <i>Lysichiton americanus</i> <i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> <i>Parthenocissus inserta</i> <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> <i>Quercus rubra</i> <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> <i>Rhus typhina</i> <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> <i>Rosa rugosa</i> <i>Rudbeckia laciniata</i> <i>Spiraea alba</i> <i>Spiraea douglasii</i> <i>Spiraea x billardii</i>	<i>Azolla filiculoides</i> <i>Elodea canadensis</i> <i>Elodea nuttallii</i> <i>Lemna minuta</i>

List defined on February 2011

All synonyms related to those species are also included in this list. The measure related to annex II does not systematically concern all cultivars and varieties directly derived from those species, even if some of them are likely to present similar risks.



Belgian Biodiversity Platform

Renseignement de détection précoce – AlterIAS

Ce formulaire vous permet de renseigner les scientifiques de la *Plate-forme belge pour la Biodiversité* au sujet d'observations qui permettraient d'identifier de nouvelles espèces invasives potentielles (ou de nouveaux cultivars). Dans ce sens, ces observations doivent concerner des taxons exotiques qui ne sont pas renseignées dans la liste *Harmonia* telle que mise à jour sur le site www.ias.biodiversity.be.

Le profil des taxons que nous ciblons ici est le suivant:

- plutôt rustiques (résistant au froid et au gel) et/ou ;
- pouvant former des massifs ou tapis denses et/ou ;
- présentant des capacités de dispersion importantes, par voie végétative ou sexuée et/ou ;
- difficiles à éliminer du milieu ou de la zone de culture (pépinière, jardin, espace vert) une fois l'espèce implantée ; ...

La Plate-forme belge pour la Biodiversité vous remercie pour votre collaboration



Formulaire à transmettre à la *Plate-forme belge pour la Biodiversité*.

Contact : Sonia Vanderhoeven

Par mail : sonia.vanderhoeven@spw.wallonie.be

ou courrier postal : Avenue de la Faculté d'Agronomie 22 ; B-5030 Gembloux

Nom et contacts de la personne responsable des observations :

Nom :
 Prénom :
 E-mail :
 Téléphone :
 Organisme / Société :

Espèce concernée :

L'espèce ou le cultivar:

Oui Non Remarques

- s'étend facilement dans le milieu ou la zone de culture
- est capable de se régénérer à partir des déchets de jardin
- s'étend facilement dans les environs immédiats du milieu ou de la zone de culture
- s'étend bien au-delà du milieu de culture
- est observée dans les milieux naturels

		Localisation : Type de milieu naturel :

Caractéristiques :

Oui Non Remarques

- production importante de graines
- bonne capacité de multiplication végétative (par boutures, stolons, rhizomes, drageons, etc.)
- capacité à former des populations denses
- bonne capacité de germination des graines
- peut être croisée avec des espèces indigènes en vue d'obtenir des hybrides
- nécessite beaucoup de soins en culture

Formulaire à transmettre à la **Plate-forme belge pour la Biodiversité**.

Contact : Sonia Vanderhoeven

Par mail : sonia.vanderhoeven@spw.wallonie.be

ou courrier postal : Avenue de la Faculté d'Agronomie 22 ; B-5030 Gembloux