**Invasives in Your Neighborhood**

**PROBLEM LAUNCH**

Conduct research to identify an invasive species in your local ecosystem.

**Timing** Beginning of Unit 2

 **PROBLEM** HOW CAN YOU REDUCE THE IMPACT OF AN INVASIVE SPECIES ON YOUR LOCAL ECOSYSTEM?

1. What is this problem asking you to solve?

# WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

1. What questions do I need to answer to solve this problem?

**GET STARTED**

To solve this problem, begin by choosing a local invasive to focus on. Choose carefully, because the invasive species you choose in this activity will be the species you focus on for the whole unit.

# THINGS TO ABOUT

* **Be sure to choose an invasive species.** Not all non-native species are invasive. An invasive species is a non-native species that is threatening the biodiversity of an ecosystem.
* **Choose a species for which you can design a solution.** In later activities, you will be designing a solution to reduce the impact of your chosen invasive on your local ecosystem. Your teacher might even have you build your design. So, be sure to choose a species for which you can execute a good solution. For example, do not choose an organism that bites or is toxic. Consider the time of year you are working on the problem. Do not choose an organism that is inactive during that time of year.

## Choose a species that you can successfully research from several reliable sources.

* **Pick a species that is interesting to you!**

**PICK A SPECIES: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

One way to find out which species might be invading your area is to visit the National Invasive Species Information Center website.

* **Go to** the National Invasive Species Information Center Website.
* Under **Browse by Geography,** click on United States.
* Find **State Resources,** and click on **More** to open up a map of the United States.
* Click on your state. Use the links provided on this page to learn about different invasives in your state. In particular, you might want to look at the **Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System** which allows you to filter a list of invasives by state and organism category.

As you research, write down a list of any invasive species you are considering. Be sure to list both the common name and the scientific name of the organism.

**WRITE IT DOWN**

1. Choose one invasive species that has thrived in your local ecosystem to focus on. Be sure to list both the common name and the scientific name.
2. Describe your organism. Traits could include qualities such as what type of organism it is (plant, animal, fungus, etc); size; color(s); identifying characteristics; life cycle; and so on.
3. Sketch your organism. Label any important characteristics.

**NATURAL HISTORY OF YOUR INVASIVE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FOOD(what it eats/how it obtains energy) |  |
| HABITAT DESCRIPTION(where it lives) |  |
| NATIVE RANGE(where it is from) |  |
| INVASIVE RANGE IN THE U.S.(where it is invading. If possible, shade in this range on the map.) |  |

1. Briefly describe characteristics of your local area, including information about climate, vegetation, and geography.
2. What human activities have helped cause the spread of the invasive species?
3. Describe any effects the invasive species has had on your local ecosystem. Be sure to support your description with evidence you have gathered from your research.
4. Have there been any efforts to control this species in your state’s ecosystem? If yes, briefly describe each effort and how successful it was, using evidence from your research.