

Introduction of National Investigation of Invasive Plants in Taiwan

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Plant invasion has been considered as one of the most serious environmental problems impacting local ecosystems and agricultural industries over the world. As most of the developed countries have been aware of the threats of invasive plants and paid substantial attentions on plant invasions, Taiwan seems to be left behind in academic, conservation, and management aspects. Since invasive species spread very fast and the consequences are usually irreversible, it is urgently in need to generate better understanding on the composition of potential invaders, field situation, and current impacts in Taiwan. The purposes of this project of nationwide investigation on invasive plants are to estimate the composition, dominant species, field distribution, and areas of impacts of naturalized species (potential invaders) for better understandings of plant invasions in Taiwan. A total of ten teams, including seven field teams, one GIS-information team, and an administration team, will be involved, and 3% of the total areas of Taiwan will be surveyed systematically in the following four years. The field data will contribute to evaluate invasion intensity, levels of impacts, endangered habitats, species list of control priority, potential distribution, and monitoring systems. Besides, the data will be compiled for further prediction, modeling, and management of invasive plants as well. Comprehensive databases and webpages of invasive species will be established for international data exchange, policy making by governmental agencies, and elevating public awareness. Furthermore, international conferences and visits will be implemented every year for scientists and experts in Taiwan to receive up-to-date ideas and themes on plant invasions. The investigation will be conducted in the plains for the first two years followed by mountain and island areas. This project aimed to complete the field investigation, data collection, basic documents for guidebooks, and monitoring systems in the end of the four-year timeline.