

Invasive weeds in and around the lake

Weeds in the yard are pests to everyone, and getting rid of them is often grueling work. The lake views invasive plants no differently. In fact, the lake sees weeds as a much more severe problem than we do. Without limbs the lake cannot discard pesky plants like us, so we have to help the lake to stay weed-free. With just a little effort, there are many things we can do to reduce the growth and spread of noxious weeds in and around the lake.

Before bringing a boat and trailer to the lake give them a good wash. Be sure to remove any plant parts from in or on the vessel and trailer. Double-check everything when you arrive at the lake before you put anything in the water. It is also a good idea to check yourself and your gear for plant parts (like burs) before you head down to the beach and again before you jump into the lake. If you find any hitchhikers remove them and put them in the garbage. Invasive weeds spread very easily by seed and vegetatively (which means that a tiny piece of a plant can grow into a new plant).

If you tend to property next to the lake or on the shoreline take care when managing your weeds. Try to pull them before they seed to reduce spreading, and discard them appropriately as soon as possible. The most effective ways to dispose of invasive plants is to burn them under a pile of wood or to cautiously bag and treat them as garbage. If they are picked before they seed they can be safely added to compost as well. Don't allow picked weeds to be blown or washed into the lake as they will wash up somewhere else and likely establish a new population there. In addition, stay away from using herbicides, as the chemicals in these substances are more harmful to the lake than noxious weeds.

If you have an aquatic weed problem around your doc or shoreline, do not pick or cut them. Aquatic invasive plants are the most notorious for vegetative reproduction. If you are not ridiculously cautious in collecting every minuscule part of the plants you are trying to get rid of, you will only multiply the problem. This situation is comparable to horror clip where someone hacks the monster up into pieces in an attempt to kill it, but the pieces rise to life and now there are numerous monsters.

Note that aquatic invasive weeds have not yet been found in Lake Windermere, so the plants that you see are most likely beneficial, native species. Also note that a permit is required from Fisheries and Oceans Canada before performing aquatic plant removal, altering the aquatic environment or modifying the foreshore. It is a federal offense to carry out any of these activities without approval from the appropriate authorities.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to educate yourself on how to identify invasive weeds

of British Columbia and places that you visit. This way you can be sure not to unknowingly plant them in your garden or overlook them as foes. Wildsight is organizing a Community Weed Pull on August 6th, from 5pm to 7pm, starting at the Toby Creek Bridge on Toby Creek Road. By participating in the weed pull you will learn to identify the invasive plants in our region and help restore the native plant ecology in Invermere. Contact Rachel at 250-344-4961 or rachel@wildsight.ca for more information.

There are many other resources available to the public that provide noxious weed education and help in dealing with invasive plant problems. Try contacting the East Kootenay Conservation Program ([HYPERLINK "http://www.ekcp.ca" www.ekcp.ca](http://www.ekcp.ca)), Weeds B.C. ([HYPERLINK "http://www.weedsbc.ca" www.weedsbc.ca](http://www.weedsbc.ca)), Invasive Plant Council of British Columbia ([HYPERLINK "http://www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca" www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca](http://www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca)), Ministry of Agriculture and Lands ([HYPERLINK "http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot" www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/cropprot)), and Ministry of Forests and Range ([HYPERLINK "http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants" www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants)).

For more information, contact the Lake Windermere Project at 250-341-6898. You can also visit the Project office located in the old District of Invermere office beside the Invermere Community Centre. The Lake Windermere Project is a long-term comprehensive stewardship program dedicated to safeguarding the health of our lake.

The Lake Windermere Project is made possible by generous support from Wildsight, Environment Canada, Columbia Basin Trust, the Real Estate Foundation of B.C., and those community members who have donated through the Lake Windermere Stewards and Ambassadors program.