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## Department of Environmental Protection Joins Statewide Effort to Educate New Yorkers About Invasive Species

### DEP will support New York State Invasive Species Awareness Week with Public Education Stops in Delaware, Putnam and Westchester Counties

The New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) today announced that it has joined a statewide effort to educate New Yorkers about invasive species, their effects on our ecosystems, and what citizens can do to prevent their spread across the watershed and other parts of the state. As part of New York Invasive Species Awareness Week, July 12-18, DEP will set up education tents at four farmers' markets in towns adjacent to the City's reservoir system. As the effects of invasive species continue to be seen throughout the state, DEP has continued to protect the watershed through education and outreach efforts, surveys to identify new infestations early, and control projects to suppress the growth of priority invasive species that could threaten water quality by hampering or changing forest regeneration, or affecting the ecology of watershed streams and reservoirs.

"The spread of invasive species is a unique environmental issue that deserves the attention of every New Yorker," **DEP Commissioner Emily Lloyd** said. "These animals, plants and microorganisms from other parts of the globe pose a risk to our forests and our water. That's why DEP has been aggressive with programs to identify them, remove them, and prevent their spread wherever possible."

New York State's Invasive Species Awareness Week was established in 2014 to promote knowledge of invasive species, to help stop their spread by engaging citizens in a wide range of activities, and to encourage New Yorkers to take action. For its part, DEP will share information about invasive species at four farmers' markets in the watershed, including Brewster (July 15), and Cold Spring (July 11) in Putnam County, Muscoot (July 12) in Westchester County, and Pakatakan (July 18) in Delaware County. The information booths will be manned by DEP employees and interns from Ulster County Community College. Students from the college have assisted DEP with its invasive species outreach and fieldwork for several years.

Because the spread of invasive species poses a risk to New York City's reservoirs and the forest lands that protect clean water, DEP has long administered programs to prevent, detect and remove them. DEP was among the first groups in New York to require steam cleaning for all boats entering its waters. Steam cleaning disinfects the boats and prevents the spread of invasive species such as zebra mussels, which can harm water quality and clog water intakes. The City has also encouraged local residents and watershed visitors to arrive with clean, drained, and dry gear, and to never dump leftover bait or

**More Information**

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aquariums that can contain invasive species.

New York City reservoirs are regularly surveyed for aquatic invasive species like zebra mussels, hydrilla and water chestnut. Particular focus is given to the areas where new invaders are most likely to be introduced, such as boat launches or areas where tributaries enter the reservoirs. When a species is detected, plans are immediately developed to control or remove it. For instance, water chestnut control is currently underway at Muscoot Reservoir where it was detected in 2014. Water chestnut can create dense mats of green vegetation at the surface, making waters hard to navigate by boat and reducing the oxygen supply for fish.

DEP has also been mitigating the impacts of the emerald ash borer, an invasive beetle that kills ash trees. The emerald ash borer was detected around Ashokan Reservoir in 2010. Several thousand beetle-infested ash trees were removed through timber harvests while the wood retained its value, allowing the trees to be used for cabinetry, wood flooring and other products. Hazard trees near roadsides and walking paths will continue to be removed. To mitigate its impact on public safety and other swaths of forest, DEP continues to survey other parts of the watershed to track the emerald ash borer's spread.

As the ash trees continue to die off, DEP has also taken steps to allow new forests to grow. This requires other invasive species to be managed. Invasive shrubs such as Japanese barberry and multiflora rose are controlled in areas where loggers will be working. Currently there is an experimental deer enclosure in one area that was recently harvested, designed to look at the impacts of deer and invasive species on young trees that are just becoming established.

Recent [legislation](#) has made it illegal to buy, sell or transport 126 invasive species in New York, including Japanese knotweed, hydrilla and Eurasian boars.

DEP encourages all its watershed neighbors to learn more about invasive species at New York's official [invasive species website](#), which also includes a list of events to mark Invasive Species Awareness Week. To learn more about what DEP is doing to protect the watershed from invasive species, visit the [invasive species page](#) on our website.

DEP manages New York City's water supply, providing more than one billion gallons of high quality water each day to more than 9 million New Yorkers. This includes more than 70 upstate communities and institutions in Ulster, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties who consume an average of 110 million total gallons of drinking water daily from New York City's water supply system. This water comes from the Catskill, Delaware, and Croton watersheds that extend more than 125 miles from the City, and the system comprises 19 reservoirs, three controlled lakes, and numerous tunnels and aqueducts. DEP has nearly 6,000 employees, including almost 1,000 scientists, engineers, surveyors, watershed maintainers and other professionals in the upstate watershed. In addition to its \$70 million payroll and \$157 million in annual taxes paid in upstate counties, DEP has invested more than \$1.7 billion in watershed protection programs—including partnership organizations such as the Catskill Watershed Corporation and the Watershed Agricultural Council—that support sustainable farming practices, environmentally sensitive economic development, and local economic opportunity. In addition, DEP has a robust capital program with nearly \$14 billion in investments planned over the next 10 years that will create up to 3,000 construction-related jobs per year. For more information, visit [nyc.gov/dep](#), like us on [Facebook](#), or follow us on [Twitter](#).

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