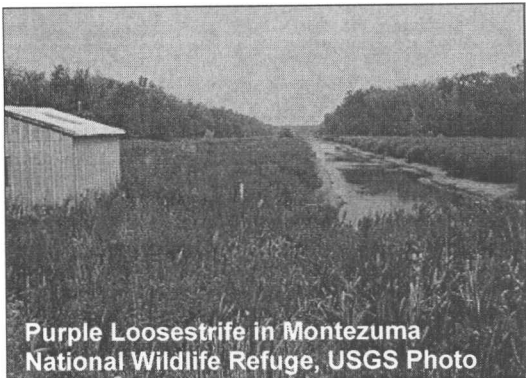


INVASIVE SPECIES IN NEW YORK

What is an invasive species?

Invasive alien species are plants, animals, or other organisms that are introduced to a given area outside their original range and cause harm in their new home. Because they have no natural enemies to limit their reproduction, they usually spread rampantly. Invasive alien species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose enormous costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human enterprises, as well as to human health.

- The cost to control invasive species and the damages they inflict upon property and natural resources in the U.S. is estimated at **\$137 billion** annually.



Purple Loosestrife in Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, USGS Photo

Invasive Species in New York: A Quick Look

New York has been invaded by a number of harmful exotic plants and animals. Here is a quick look at some of the worst current and potential invaders:

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Zebra mussel	Mollusk	Caspian Sea region of Asia; accidentally released into Lake St. Clair in 1988 in ship ballast water	Found in Lake Ontario, Erie, all Finger Lakes and Hudson Valley	Voracious filter feeders that out-compete native animals; fouls boats & clogs intake pipes at power plants and municipal water sources
Purple loosestrife	Wetland plant	Europe and Asia; introduced in 1800s as ornamental and medicinal plant in 1800s	Found throughout NY, especially in central region	Displaces native wetland plants; has less food and habitat value for waterfowl and other wildlife
Asian long-horned beetle	Insect	China; entered in 1996 as a “hitchhiker” on wood packing material	4,600 trees in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island	Controlling NYC infestations has cost \$180 million; if beetle escapes, it could devastate timber, tourism, maple syrup and street trees in northeast
West Nile virus	Virus	Uganda; first reported in NY and CT in 1999	Found in every county in New York	New York has reported 193 human cases and 17 deaths; WNV has also killed thousands of birds and over 100 horses
Garlic mustard	Weed	Europe; brought by settlers as a vitamin-rich winter herb	Throughout NY south of Adirondacks	Grows earlier in spring than native plants, allowing it to dominate forest understory and crowd out natives
Chestnut blight	Fungus	China; probably introduced on nursery stock in the 1890s. It was first detected in New York city in 1904.	By 1926, the disease had devastated chestnuts from Maine to Alabama	Chestnut once comprised one-fourth to one-half of eastern U.S. forests, and was prized for its durable wood, and as a food for humans, livestock and wildlife. Today, only stump-sprouts from killed trees remain.