

CLDC TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR THE IDENTIFICATION, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Introduction Manual

Introduction

A very warm welcome to this three-month training programme to help you learn everything you need to know about invasive plant species which may be lurking in your gardens and local areas.

We hope you will gain a lot from this unique training programme, and that it will enhance your knowledge and understanding of invasive species and their connection to climate change and biodiversity loss. By the end of the training, you will have the practical skills and tools to protect your local green spaces from invasive species and, by doing this, you will help to protect biodiversity and slow the pace of climate change.

Our sincere wish is that this training programme inspires each of you to become biodiversity champions in your own unique ways, regardless of prior experience. Using our multi-layered approach, we will provide you with the tools and knowledge you need, and the opportunity to network with other like-minded people. Together, we can stop the introduction of invasive species and prevent the dispersal of those that have already established.

There are no criteria for joining and you do not need any prior knowledge.

If you have any queries, please contact biodiversityleader@gmail.com.



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Who is CLDC?

CLDC is a community led local development organisation that delivers programmes which improve the quality of life for the people of Co. Clare. CLDC's ethos is based on equality, being inclusive and being community led. The organisation believes in building the capacity of people and communities to address their own development needs and works in partnership with other local bodies to deliver the best outcomes for the county.

Accordingly, CLDC delivers a range of rural development, social inclusion, enterprise and community supports to communities and businesses at local level in Co. Clare. Supports include the LEADER Transitional Programme 2020-2022, the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022, Rural Social Scheme, Tús and the Walks Scheme.

This bespoke invasive alien species training programme is funded under the biodiversity objective of CLDC's Local Development Strategy for delivery of LEADER; *to support communities and landowners in general biodiversity awareness*. CLDC is delighted to appoint Dr. Frances Giaquinto and her team to deliver the programme on its behalf.

Who are the trainers?

Dr Fran Giaquinto is a plant ecologist who has specialised in invasive alien plants and invasive tree diseases since 2008. She lives in East Clare.

Linda Gilsean is an experienced organic gardener who has a wealth of practical experience of sustainable gardening, including the creation and management of trees and hedgerows, pollinator-friendly landscaping, and management of green waste. She lives in Co. Meath.

Phoebe O'Brien is a well-known expert botanist and vascular plant specialist who provides consultancy services to the National Parks and Wildlife Service. She also has a wealth of experience of teaching about plant identification and plant ecology and runs an Instagram page – phoebeobrienbotanist – which has over 1000 followers. She lives in East Clare.

Nicholas Head is an invasive species contractor who has spent the last 13 years developing methods of invasive species control that minimise harm to the environment, including methods that do not involve the use of herbicide. He lives in East Clare.

What is the training approach?

We want to equip you with the skills and knowledge to confidently identify invasive plants in your communities, how to submit sightings, and to know how to stop their spread, control them where appropriate, and to prevent new introductions.

We will show you how to control invasive species without the use of herbicide. When herbicide use is necessary, we will explain who to contact and how to make sure that the use of chemicals do not harm the local environment.

Our aim is to motivate and inspire you to become champions in your community. Our teaching style is friendly and lively, and we will provide you with all the tools you need to be confident in your knowledge. We will upskill you in your communities so that the training is specific to your needs and localities.



How long does the training last?

The training will last 3 months, starting on Wednesday 8th March with completion at the end of May.

What does the training consist of?

The training starts with 8 webinars, held once a week on Wednesdays. The webinars will start at 7pm and last 45 min, with an additional 15 min for questions and answers.

Towards the end of April, we will visit your communities using a mixture of field work and classroom studies to teach you practical tools.

Who can participate?

We will be centred in Ennis, Kilrush, Lisdoonvarna, Scarriff, and Shannon. Anyone living in or around these areas is welcome to join. We welcome several participants from each community.

What are the criteria for joining?

None! All we ask is that you commit to the three-month training and participate as actively as you can.

What if I can't attend all the webinars and activities?

This won't matter! The webinars will be recorded and made available for everyone to watch again. Each webinar will be accompanied by handouts which we will send you. Likewise, we will provide written materials for all the practical sessions. By the end of the training you will have a written manual that we hope will be useful for years to come.

I want to help control invasive species but I don't want to use herbicide. Does this matter?

Not at all! Over the last 12 years we have been working hard to develop methods to control invasive species that do not involve the use of herbicide. Sometimes, herbicide is the only way to control some difficult invasive plant species but, in these cases, we will explain who to contact to help you and how to develop methods that minimise the amount of herbicide that is used.

What will I learn in the webinars?

The webinar schedule is as follows:

Each webinar will be held on a Wednesday evening, starting at 7 pm and ending at 8 pm. The webinar will last 45 min followed by 15 min for questions and answers.

Webinar schedule

Webinar no.	Topic	Delivery
1	Introduction and welcome. The link between invasive species, climate change, and biodiversity loss What are invasive species and how have they got here The characteristics of invasive species Principles of control	Fran 8 March
2	Invasive species in your gardens Garden plants that become invasive, including pond weeds Invasive alien soil organisms Invasive species and green waste	Linda 15 March
3	How to identify the most common invasive plants Invasive plants that people don't know about	Phoebe 22 March
4	The importance of native plants in your garden How to stop invasive plants and organisms arriving in your gardens Keeping your garden healthy and resilient	Linda 29 March
5	What to do when you suspect an invasive plant How to find more information and who to report an invasive species to How to report sightings to Biodiversity Ireland's Invasive Species database Resources available to help you	Fran 5 April
6	Biosecurity and preventing new introductions Methods of control Your case studies	Fran 12 April
7	Methods of control Your case studies	Fran 19 April
8	Bringing it all together Your case studies Questions and answers.	Linda & Fran 26 April



When will the practical training be held?

We will run a mixture of classroom studies and field work in your communities, with each visit to each area lasting about 3 hours.

The dates are as follows:

Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 April	28 April	29 April
4 May	5 May	6 May
11 May	12 May	13 May

How can we ask questions during the training?

There will be 15 minutes at the end of each webinar when we will invite questions. Also, you can email us with questions and we will cover them in the following webinar, so that everyone can learn. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions during the site visits.

I have attended previous webinars and training on invasive species. Will I learn anything new?

Yes! First, we will base the teaching on your case studies so that the problems you have with invasive species in your communities will be directly addressed.

We have a module on invasive species that may be lurking in your gardens. This is a topic that is rarely covered.

There are several new resources available in County Clare and nationally which are full of useful information and activities that you can get involved with. We will teach you about these.

I don't know how to use Zoom. Does this matter?

Not at all! If you are new to Zoom, please email us at biodiversityleader@gmail.com and we will send you simple instructions to guide you.

Thanks to Clare Local Development Company for hosting this part European LEADER funded programme

