

Voluntary Code of Conduct for Saint Lucia's Ornamental Plant Sector (OPS VCoC)

An output produced by the public and private partners attending the
Ornamental Plants and Invasive Alien Species Workshop,

held at the Forestry Department, Union, Saint Lucia, 14 Sept., 2011,

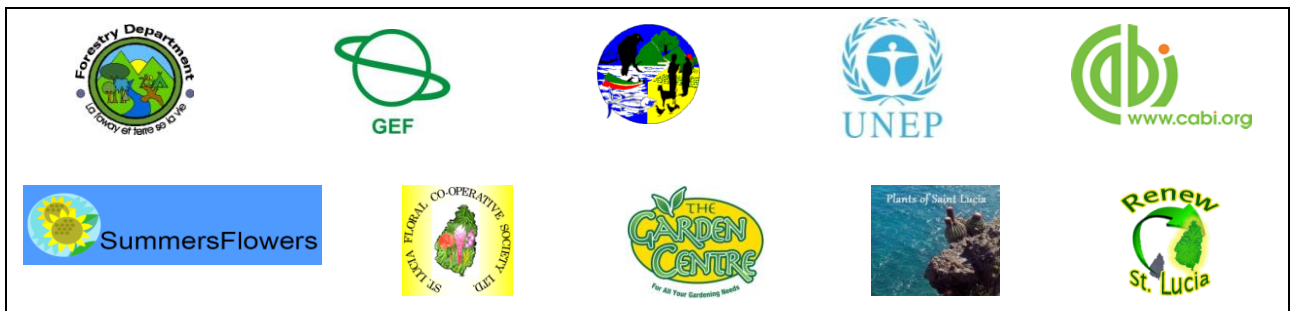
under the project

Mitigating the Threats of Invasive Alien Species in the Insular Caribbean

Project No. GFL / 2328 – 2713-4A86, GF-1030-09-03



Black willow (*Quadrella cynophallophora*) is a beautiful native plant with potential for the ornamental industry (Photo: <http://www.saintlucianplants.com>)



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1. Scope

Ornamental plants are terrestrial or aquatic plants grown and used for decorative purposes in homes, gardens or landscape designs, including cut flowers, dried plant parts and potpourris, and aquarium species. This Voluntary Code of Conduct (VCoC) covers all activities involving ornamental plants and their viable parts, i.e. their collection, production, propagation, cultivation, floristry, topiary, bonsai, importation, trade, marketing, sale, barter, distribution, arrangement, exhibition and exportation.

The VCoC provides guidelines for ecological gardening and business practices. It follows the hierarchical management approach of Saint Lucia's National Invasive Species Strategy (NISS), comprising (i) Prevention, (ii) Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR), (iii) Eradication, (iv) Mitigation and Containment, and (v) Restoration, combined with Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) at all levels. The OPS VCoC is intended to compliment compliance with existing laws and regulations, which will be fully honoured by all those who chose to adopt this VCoC.

2. Preventative Measures

- Conduct an internal review examining all activities that provide an opportunity to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species: ornamental plants as well as their pest and pathogens.
- Ensure that the invasive potential of plants is assessed prior to introducing and marketing a plant species new to Saint Lucia. Invasive potential should be assessed by qualified experts using recognized risk assessment methods and procedures, i.e. Invasives Information

Network (I3N) of the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN) and the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures N° 2 (ISPM2) of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

- Purchase and plant only non-invasive species.
- Identify and specify non-invasive species that are aesthetically and horticulturally suitable alternatives to invasive species. Work towards and promote new landscape designs that are friendly to local ecosystems.
- Help develop non-invasive alternatives through plant selection or breeding.
- Request that nurseries and retailers promote, display and sell only non-invasive species. Urge florists and other peers to eliminate the use of invasive plant material.
- Encourage clients and business partners to follow all laws on importation, exportation, quarantine and distribution of plant materials across political boundaries.
- Do not make plant propagules available to anybody you suspect may smuggle them abroad.

3. Mitigating Measures

- Be observant and responsible by regular monitoring of the garden sites and, where possible, also natural habitats. Participate in early warning systems by reporting invasive plants you observe to the relevant authority, i.e. the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands, Forestry and Fisheries (MALFF).
- Collaborate with authorities in stock-taking and identifying potential invasive risk factors on your property to facilitate Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR).
- Phase out existing stocks of invasive species by removal and destruction, e.g. burning. Never discard viable exotic plant parts into natural habitats, drains or water ways.
- Remove invasive species from you property and all plant collections or displays, and replace them with non-invasive species suited to your site and needs. If for any reason the decision is made to retain an invasive species, ensure its containment and provide strong interpretation to the public, explaining the risk of the species and its exceptional function in this location.
- If your institution participates in seed or plant distribution, do not distribute or trade known and suspected invasive plants, except for *bona fide* research purposes at authorized

stations. Consider attaching a statement of caution to species that appear to be potentially invasive but have not been fully evaluated.

- Encourage nurseries and other suppliers to provide landscape contractors and the public with non-invasive plants.
- Be aware of potential environmental impacts beyond the designed and managed area of the landscape plan (for example, plants may spread to adjacent natural areas or cropland).
- Seek to control harmful invasive species in natural areas managed by the garden and assist others in controlling them on their property, whenever possible.
- Organize community work days to remove invasive plant species and replace them with non-invasive alternatives, under the guidance of knowledgeable professionals.

4. Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA)

- Seek and promote reliable information on which species are invasive or potentially invasive in Saint Lucia. Work with local plant ecologists, horticulturists, nurseries, botanic gardens, conservation organizations and others to determine what species are invasive or show aggressive potential. Consult experts whenever uncertain; refer others to experts you know.
- Take advantage of continuing education opportunities to learn more about the invasive species issue. Encourage your staff members, clients and business partners to do the same.
- Assist the public in environmentally safe gardening by increasing awareness about invasive plants. Provide information on why they are a problem, their origin, mechanisms of harm and need for prevention and control. Display and distribute educational material on invasive plants and their management.
- Proactively promote non-invasive and native plants.
- Ask the media to emphasize the problem of invasive species and provide information. Request that garden writers promote only non-invasive species.
- Help educate your community and other gardeners in your area. Invite speakers knowledgeable on the invasive species issue to speak to gardeners, horticultural clubs, schools and other community groups.
- Proactively promote adoption of the OPS VCoC among colleagues and business partners.

5. Regional collaboration and knowledge exchange

- Increase interaction with other professionals and hobbyists to identify alternative plant material and cost-effective solutions invasive plant issues. Collate and share this information in a manner that is accessible to all.
- Participate in the up-date of global databases and, if approached by such initiatives, the creation of regional lists of concern or sanction.
- Become informed about the invasiveness of species beyond Saint Lucia. Be aware that our native ornamental plants could become invasive elsewhere and consider the consequences of distribution of Saint Lucian plants outside national territory. Be sensitive to the laws in potential importing countries and encourage clients to comply with them. Do not knowingly trade with clients you suspect of breaking laws in their countries.
- Be sensitive to multilateral conventions and treaties that deal with the issue of invasive plants or their pests and diseases and encourage clients and business partners to do the same, whether these agreements are legislated locally or not.
- Exchange experiences with invasive ornamental plants at trade shows. Partner with regional/global organizations in the management of invasive species.