

What is the Invasive Plant Management Program?

Valley Water is committed to protecting the ecology of the county’s watersheds and hundreds of miles of streams. As part of its stewardship objectives, Valley Water removes invasive plant species that displace native flora and threaten wildlife in Santa Clara County.

The Invasive Plant Management Program (IPMP) targets weed species with the highest ecological impact. These species spread aggressively, outcompete native species, degrade soil stability and habitat, and reduce ecological diversity. They also exacerbate flooding and fire risk and block access to roads and trails.

Which invasive plants are targeted?



Top row: stinkwort, eucalyptus, English ivy
Bottom row: tree of heaven, arundo, Himalayan blackberry

The IPMP currently covers 40+ invasive plant species and expands as new threats are identified in Santa Clara County.

Trees	Shrubs & Vines	Herbs & Grasses
Acacia, ash, black locust, casuarina, elm, eucalyptus, holly oak, Lombardy poplar, olive, palm, Peruvian pepper tree, privet, tree of heaven, walnut, weeping willow	Broom, Cape ivy, Italian buckthorn, cotoneaster, Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, red sesbania, salt cedar, tree tobacco	Atlantic cordgrass, arundo, artichoke, castor bean, common reed, fennel, harding grass, hemlock, pampas grass, parrot feather, pepperweed, periwinkle, star thistle, stinkwort



Crews removing Himalayan blackberry from Guadalupe River, San Jose.

Where does Valley Water remove invasive plants?

Valley Water can manage invasive plants on three types of property:

- Property owned by Valley Water (fee title);
- Property where Valley Water has an exclusive easement in which the property owner is excluded from actively using the property; and
- Property where Valley Water has an easement for flood protection, storm drainage, or water conservation.

Private property owners are responsible for invasive plant management on their own properties, even if Valley Water has an easement.

How are project sites selected?

Valley Water carries out early detection and systematic removal of invasive plants in high-quality habitats. It also undertakes control efforts in degraded habitats to improve ecological function and begin the transition back to native plant cover. Criteria for site selection include quality of habitat and potential impact to sensitive species, feasibility of control, fire and flood risk, site access and logistics, density of invasive species, degree of invasiveness and rate of spread, and site wildlife and fishery value.

Additionally, Valley Water conducts opportunistic removal of invasive plants in stream locations where work is being carried out to maintain the flood-carrying capacity of flood protection projects.



Crews removing arundo (giant reed) from Coyote Creek, San Jose.

Community and ecological benefits

The IPMP protects high quality riparian and wetland habitats and restores degraded ones by:

- Reducing competition to native plant species, thus encouraging re-establishment;
- Improving ecological function of existing riparian and wetland habitat so it can support more diverse wildlife species, including pollinators, birds, mammals, fish, and state and federally listed sensitive species;
- Improving patchy wildlife corridors by increasing habitat connectivity.

Invasive plant management activities

Valley Water’s invasive plant management strategies include carefully timed hand and mechanical removal efforts as well as the application of low toxicity herbicides in accordance with Integrated Pest Management principles.

Expect to see crews for five years following initial removal efforts. Crews may utilize power tools such as chainsaws, weed eaters, polesaws, blowers, and hedgetrimmers. Crews may also be applying herbicide directly to foliage or cut stumps. Care is taken to minimize drift and impacts to non-target species.

Equipment on an IPMP site can include spray trucks, walk-behind mowers, wood chippers, skid-steers, and trash compactors.



Before invasive plant management on Calabazas Creek, Cupertino.



After invasive plant management on Calabazas Creek, Cupertino.

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CONTACT US

For more information, contact **Jocelyn Torralba** at (408)630-3863 or visit our website at valleywater.org and use our Access Valley Water customer request and information system. With three easy steps, you can use this service to find out the latest information on Valley Water projects or to submit questions, complaints or compliments directly to a staff person.

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