

Invasive Plants Activity Guide

Wherever you are in the country, there are plants that have evolved to survive under the given growing conditions, and chances are, there are some that have moved in more recently. **Native plants** grow naturally in a region and have developed a healthy relationship with the other plants and animals in the ecosystem, strengthening biodiversity. **Invasive plants** have been introduced to an area where they do not grow naturally, competing with native plants for needs like space and nutrients.

NATIVE PLANTS



Found in northern midwest and northeast US states. It grows in wet meadows, marshy areas, and along river and lake shores. Pollinated by bumblebees, skipper butterflies, and moths.



Forms dense stands in shallow water and provide nesting sites for red-winged blackbirds, ducks, geese and fish. Muskrats and beavers enjoy the shoots and roots, while teal ducks, finches and least bitterns eat the seeds.



Depends on hummingbirds, which feed on the nectar, for pollination. Birds and butterflies also eat the nectar.

INVASIVE PLANTS



Can reduce oxygen levels, increasing the potential for fish kills. It competes with native vegetation and is of little value to waterfowl. Water chestnut infestations limit boating, fishing, swimming and other recreational activities.



Forms dense homogeneous stands that consume available growing space and push out other plants. It also alters wetland hydrology, increases potential for fire, and reduces and degrades wetland wildlife habitat due in part to its very dense growth habit.



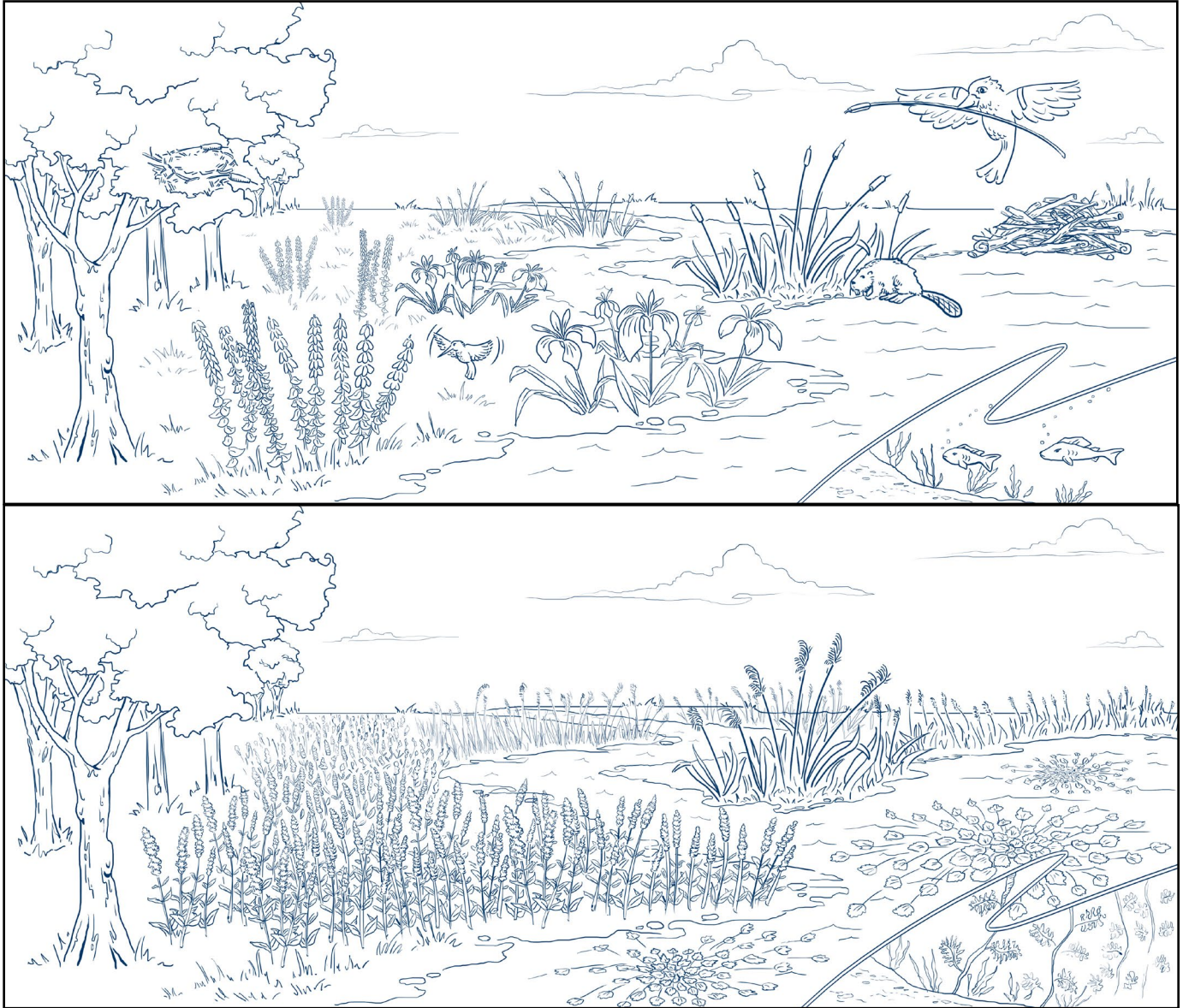
Able to rapidly establish and replace native vegetation with a dense, homogeneous stand that reduces local biodiversity, endangers rare species and provides little value to wildlife.

*These plants are native to many regions of the US, but not all.

Can You Spot the Differences?

Using what you learned on the front of this worksheet about common native and invasive plants, see if you can identify some of the plants included in the scenes below. Besides the types of plants, what else is different between the two scenes? What might be causing these differences?

Color the scenes to bring them to life!



Additional Resources:

- Find plants native to your region.
- Watch the Citizen Science Tackles Invasive Species Webinar.
- Check out NEEF's Pollinator Activity Guide for more fun ideas.