

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee
Feb.17, 2009

RE: Opposed to Eliminating Funding for Invasives Plants Program

FROM: Katchen Coley, Middletown Garden Club, Member of The GardenClub of America and Federated Garden Clubs of Ct.; 191 Maple Shade Rd.; Middletown, Ct., 06457

Garden clubbers all over the State have watched with mounting alarm as invasives arrive weekly from exotic environments to attack the bio-diversity of Connecticut's plants and trees and waters. As our plants are crowded out by this Green Enemy, additional consequences are being suffered by our insects and consequently our birds, and on up the food chain to our mammals. Volunteers – gardeners, horticulturalists, scientists and even many nurseries - have been attempting to stem the tide. But it seemed like a losing battle.

Imagine the relief of these front-line soldiers when this Legislature wisely created the Invasive Plants Council a few years ago. Of course the annual budget of \$500,000 was only a minor step in helping DEP to monitor the situation. But it did allow DEP to coordinate the work of DEP staff as well as hundreds of volunteers across the State (including MANY garden clubbers) who are struggling to control the spread of the invasive Green Enemy that is devastating our Ct. natural habitats.

Now even this inadequate first step in the battle to save our State's habitat is threatened by the Governor's proposal to eliminate this funding. Believe me, garden clubbers will be watching to see what will happen on this crucial front!