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Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests

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Invasions of nonnative plants into southern forests continue to go unchecked and unmonitored. Invasive nonnative plants infest under and beside forest canopies and occupy small forest openings, increasingly eroding forest productivity, hindering forest use and management, and degrading diversity and wildlife habitat. Often called nonnative, exotic, non-indigenous, alien, or noxious weeds, they occur as trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, ferns, and forbs. Some have been introduced into this country accidentally, but most were brought here as ornamentals or for livestock forage. These robust plants arrived without their natural predators of insects and diseases that tend to keep native plants in natural balance. Now they increase across the landscape with little opposition, beyond the control and reclamation measures applied by landowners and managers on individual land holdings. The objective of this book is to provide information on accurate identification and effective control of the 33 plants or groups that are invading the forests of the 13 Southern States at an alarming rate, showing both growing and dormant season traits. It lists other nonnative invasive plants of growing concern and explains control recommendations and selective application procedures. The text and photographs were originally developed to assist in the first region-wide survey and monitoring of these invading species, conducted by the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis Research Work Unit of the Southern Research Station in collaboration with State forestry management agencies. The four-number survey codes as well as the international plant codes are given for each species. Integrated vegetation management programs are needed to combat invading nonnative plants. Strategies of surveillance and treatment of new arrivals will safeguard lands, and reclamation of existing infestations can be achieved by concerted control measures and reestablishment of native vegetation.

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