

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention

How garden center and pet store staff can help

Learn how to identify prohibited invasive species

It is unlawful (a misdemeanor) to possess, import, purchase, transport, or introduce these species except under a permit for disposal, control, research, or education. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)

Understand the invasive species laws. The most current list of prohibited and regulated invasive species is available here: dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/laws. If you suspect you may have received a prohibited species in a shipment or a customer brings one in, please contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources AIS specialist, Kelly Pennington, at 651-259-5131 or kelly.pennington@state.mn.us for additional instructions.

Limit the regulated invasive species you sell

It is legal to possess, sell, buy, and transport regulated invasive species, but they may not be introduced into a free-living state, such as being released or planted in public waters. (Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)

Although it is legal to sell regulated invasive species, some may become a problem if released to Minnesota waters. Check the list and try to limit the number of these species that you sell.

Educate your customers

Possibly the biggest impact you can have in preventing the introduction and spread of AIS is telling your customers not to release their pets and plants outdoors. This includes dumping pets and aquarium water where they may flow to a storm drain or surface water or placing an aquatic plant in a lake or wetland. Opportunities to spread the don't release message occur when plants and pets are bagged or packaged and at checkout. **All store employees can help spread the message.**

Most people do not want to destroy unwanted pets or plants. Consider offering a take-back program or refer customers to the Minnesota Aquarium Society auctions and take-back programs: aquarium.mn/auction.

Check your shipments for hitchhikers

Unordered species such as fish, crayfish, plants, plant fragments, and snails may come in with your shipment. Carefully check your order, clean off plants, and dispose of unwanted species using the Hennepin County Disposal Guidelines. Even a small plant fragment can grow and spread in the right conditions.

Safely dispose of all non-native species

Any other unwanted non-native or unknown species should also be disposed using the County guidelines or other practice that prevents them from being released outside.