The Americas

South America

Alien species in South America

Silvia Ziller
Diretora Executiva - Executive Director
Instituto Hórus de Desenvolvimento e Conservação Ambiental
The Horus Institute for Environmental Conservation and Development
Florianópolis - SC, Brasil
www.institutohorus.org.br

Although the issue of invasive alien species is still not widely known in Latin America, as in other parts of the world, many countries have recognized them as a major threat and are moving to generate information and implement management and control actions at least in protected areas.

A joint effort of the I3N – IABIN invasive species thematic information network, The Horus Institute of Brazil (www.institutohorus.org.br), The Universidad Nacional del Sur in Argentina (www.inbiar.org.ar), the extinct Invasive Alien Species Program for South America of The Nature Conservancy, and the Global Invasive Species Programme (www.gisp.org) has changed the level of awareness and action on the issue in Latin America. Seventeen countries are developing national invasive species databases, a number of them already online (see http://i3n.iabin.net), and other six countries are developing national strategies.

In Brazil, the Horus Institute’s efforts have led to systematic control of invasive species in protected areas in the states of Parana, Espirito Santo and Santa Catarina, currently in expansion to Sao Paulo and Pernambuco. A national database is available through www.institutohorus.org.br, and the Ministry of Environment plans to publish the results of national surveys on invasive species still in 2009, as well as approving the first national strategy for invasive alien species following directives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

On May 22nd, a State Program for Invasive Alien Species will be officially announced in Curitiba, Parana, where a second edition of an official list of species is also underway (so far the only official list in the country). In Santa Catarina, a practical control action will take place in one of the state’s protected areas. In Sao Paulo, a seminar to broaden the discussion on invasive species will be held by the State Environmental Agency. Other states, such as Santa Catarina, Sao Paulo, Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro are preparing official invasive species lists to be published and serve as a reference to avoid the use of these species in restoration projects, as well as to inform the public about the risks and impacts of biological invasions.

Another indicator of change is the fact that the major scientific events on biodiversity now cover invasive species issues. The first congress on biological invasions in Brazil was held in April this year, while the National Botany Congress (July) and the National Protected Areas Congress (September) will also hold seminars on the topic.
Changes in this reality are needed and welcome, but still require cultural changes and more information to the general public. Awareness results in improved practices even in choosing ornamental plants or pets to have at home – and fighting biological invasions is everybody’s task.

**Online databases in Latin America:**

Argentina [www.inbiar.org.ar](http://www.inbiar.org.ar)
Brazil [www.institutohorus.org.br](http://www.institutohorus.org.br)
Colombia [http://ef.humboldt.org.co/](http://ef.humboldt.org.co/)
Costa Rica [http://invasoras.acebio.org](http://invasoras.acebio.org)
Ecuador Galápagos [http://www.hear.org/galapagos/invasives/](http://www.hear.org/galapagos/invasives/)
Paraguay [http://www.i3n.org.py/](http://www.i3n.org.py/)
Uruguay [http://uruguavi3n.iabin.net/](http://uruguavi3n.iabin.net/)

![Control of invasive trees (Ligustrum) at the Vila Velha State Park in Parana, Brazil](image)

*Photo Silvia Ziller*
Control of invasive trees *(Ligustrum)* at the Vila Velha State Park in Parana, Brazil

Photo Silvia Ziller