

## **We Are Being Invaded!**

Practice observation skills and get to know your local “natural” neighbourhood or park.

### Directions

1. Students spread out in an indoor or outdoor area so most (not all) of the Students are still able to touch if they stretch out their arms and legs. The group represents a local forest (for BC it would be temperate rainforest or boreal forest) or grassland area.
2. Explain to the Students that introduced or foreign plant species are those that are brought by humans or animals into areas where they did not exist previously. An invasive species is one that can outcompete native species and can take over the habitat of the native species.
3. Select one girl to be an invasive plant. (Ask the student to select which plant she would like to be. It should be from her local region – you can have her select something from the list of Invasive Species included at the end of this document).
4. Place a dot sticker (or piece of tape) on one hand of the student who was selected to be an “invasive plant”.
5. Explain that native plant species are those that naturally inhabit an area. Ask the rest of the Students to select a native plant that they would like to be (they can choose from the list of Native Plants included at the end of this document); they all stay in one place to “put down their strong roots”, wave their arms to represent branches blowing in the wind, and spread their seeds.
6. The invasive plant can “shoot” seeds, like a Himalayan balsam plant (also known as Policeman’s helmet). To do this the student can move one arm and one leg and stretch out.
7. If a native plant gets touched, she will turn into an invasive plant and get a sticker on her hand. She will also be able to stretch out an arm and a leg and touch other plants in the area, turning them into invasive plants. This can be represented by passing out stickers to each new invader.
8. Stop the game when most of the plants have been turned into invasive plants. Ask all the invasive plants to sit down and the native plants to remain standing.
9. Discuss with the Students what happened during the game. Discuss what would happen to the birds, mammals and insects that depend on the native plant species for food and shelter if these native plant species all died because of the invasive plant species.

### **Supplies**

- Large ‘dot’ stickers or pieces of tape
- Large play area