Introduction:

Exotic, invasive plant species pose a major ecological and economic threat to the natural ecosystems of Georgia. These alien invaders have an adverse effect on the diversity of Georgia’s native plants and contribute to the loss of important habitat for our native animals. Kudzu and privet are choking out trees and wildflowers in forests throughout the state, and the impacts of cogon grass and garlic mustard have yet to be determined.

Invasive exotic plants currently infest millions of acres of forest land in the Southeast and their range continues to expand. All federal park and forest lands in the Southeast currently have exotic infestations (Hamel and Shade 1985, Hester 1991).

While scientists across the state are studying the threat of exotic invasives, public education is equally important in the battle to combat these alien invaders. In order to give teachers and non-formal educators the resources they need to begin introducing their students to the adverse impact these plants have on our natural areas, Elachee Nature Science Center and the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council have partnered to develop curriculum that is easily incorporated into the classroom and non-traditional educational programs. This first edition of Alien Invaders! includes a few activities to get you started. Additional activities will be added in future editions, including additional activities for 9th-12th grades.

This project has been reviewed by many people: educators- both classroom teachers and non-formal educators, GA EPPC board members, Georgia Forestry, and Elachee staff. We hope that you will find these activities useful.

We welcome your input! If you have corrections or recommendations for additional activities, please send them to:

   Alien Invaders!
   2125 Elachee Drive
   Gainesville, GA 30504

Sincerely,

Connie Gray
President, GA EPPC