



I am often asked about native and invasive plants, and even see these terms being used incorrectly at times in general discourse. Invasive plants are ones that are not native to a defined area, and cause marked ecological harm. They can drive out native plant species and dominate natural areas by producing large quantities of seeds, thriving on disturbed or poor soil, and may produce chemicals in leaves or roots that inhibit the growth of other nearby plants. I would like to highlight a recent project the Public Works Department spearheaded in this area.

In April 2022, an invasive plant ([‘Stinking Roger’ - *Osteospermum culendulaceum*](#)), never before observed on the continental U.S., was detected on a hillside in Laguna Beach. Over 2,000 individual plants were surveyed across



LCF staff removing Stinking Roger in Laguna Beach

neatly and acre of land, maintained by multiple landowners, and directly adjacent to large swathes of open space. Through the efforts of the City Arborist, the Public Works Department took a leadership role in coordinating a unified response between stakeholders, including the Laguna Beach Fire Department, OC Parks, California Native Plant Society, University of California, Laguna Canyon Foundation, Natural Communities Coalition, OC Agriculture Commissioner, and the California Department of Agriculture. The objective is a complete eradication to prevent further spread, greater environmental disruption, and costly solution in the future.

All of our partners played a specialized role in the response that helped emphasize how having a diverse working group can yield better results when overcoming obstacles. Our partners aided with documentation photo and drafting informational releases, collecting samples for testing an analysis, as well as developing the management plans that are being implemented to control the spread of this plant. All known populations of Stinking Roger were successfully treated, including chemical controls and hand pulling. Public Works will continue to monitor this plant, to ensure it doesn't get a foothold in Laguna, allowing it to spread into natural areas and nearby cities.

The California Invasive Plant Council (CAL-IPC) protects California's natural lands and waters from ecologically damaging invasive plants through science, education, and policy. Learn what at you can do at your home or garden to protect Laguna's natural areas at the [CAL-IPC website](#).



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Through *LAGUNA ROOTS*, I will give periodic updates on Laguna's urban forestry program. Until then, feel free to contact me directly with any questions. You can also use [AskLaguna!](#) to submit a request for City services, including any tree related inquiries!