

Jahresthema · Tema dell'anno ·
Garden Highlight ·

2023

Invasive Neophytes

Neophytes ('New plants') are alien plant species which were not originally native to Europe. It was only after the discovery of America in 1492 that these species began to make their way to Europe and other parts of the world, set off on their travels by we humans both by accident and by intent. Some voyaged by ship, some by train, and others with the transportation of goods; over time, and particularly over the last 200 years, wind, water and their own root systems have dispersed them from domestic gardens to their adoptive homes in the open countryside. They are, then, a consequence of globalisation.

Many neophytes have not (yet) run wild, have integrated well into their new homes, and are of ornamental and practical utility; this group comprises plants such as dahlias, potatoes and tomatoes, which, if left to their own devices, cannot survive the cold European winters.

Others, however, reproduce and proliferate with rapid ease, forming well-established populations which crowd out native plant species; known as invasive neophytes, these latter plants pose a competitive threat and are, for the most part, detrimental to biodiversity, the economy, and our health. This group also comprises plants known as transformers, which radically change the environment and vegetation – and, as such, the landscape – and disrupt symbiosis with other organisms, e.g., rare butterfly species.

The annual theme of the Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle in 2023 shines the spotlight on these invasive neophytes: A trail through the gardens introduces visitors to 35 species of migrant plants located at a variety of stages, together with an explanation of their negative impact on the environment and tips on how to deal with them.



Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)



Canadian waterweed (*Elodea Canadensis*)



Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*)

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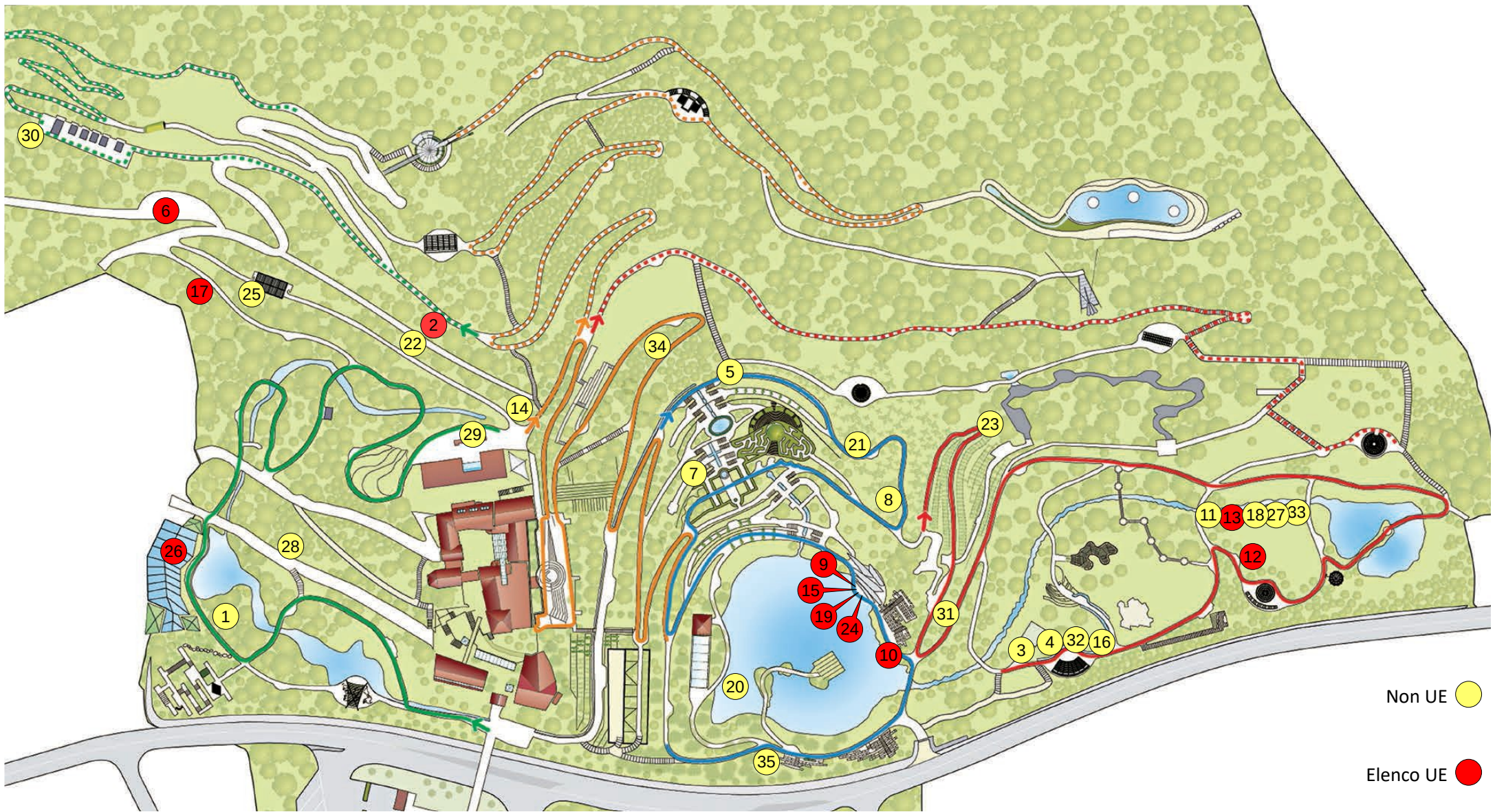
Whether they have been introduced intentionally or by accident, one thing is for sure: Once they're here, it's hard to get rid of them. One prime example can be seen in the poisonous giant hogweed: Skin contact with this plant followed by exposure to sunlight causes severe burns in humans.

Other uninvited guests which have made their home in many bodies of water are the Canadian and Nuttall's waterweed, which occupy waters to the extent that lake swimming is all but impossible.

One particular invasive neophyte soared to fame in the haute cuisine of 17th century Paris: The Jerusalem artichoke. The inulin-rich tubers of this plant were used in pre-Columbian times, and it later went on to become a staple of the French Court. Considered a great delicacy, the Jerusalem artichoke was cultivated throughout Europe for many long years until it was ousted by the potato; relegated to providing fodder for domestic and wild animals, its route to the wilderness was unimpeded.

The neophyte problem is exacerbated by climate change, which will make it considerably easier for numerous heat-loving Mediterranean or subtropical 'new plants' to spread their roots.

It is of the utmost importance to be cautious of which 'new plants,' we bring into our gardens. In some cases, it is best to steer clear of them altogether, while others are actively subject to an EU-wide ban. The Gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle, therefore, are committed to promoting awareness of this issue, and to encouraging a responsible approach towards invasive neophytes.



Non UE ●

Elenco UE ●

1 *Acer negundo*

2 *Ailanthus altissima*

3 *Ambrosia artemisiifolia*

4 *Artemisia verlotiorum*

5 *Arundo donax*

6 *Asclepias syriaca*

7 *Buddleja davidii*

8 *Carpobrotus acinaciformis*

9 *Elodea canadensis/nuttallii*

10 *Gunnera tinctoria*

11 *Helianthus tuberosus*

12 *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

13 *Impatiens glandulifera*

14 *Lantana camara*

15 *Ludwigia grandiflora*

16 *Lupinus polyphyllus*

17 *Lysichiton americanus*

18 *Lythrum salicaria*

19 *Myriophyllum aquaticum*

20 *Nelumbo nucifera*

21 *Opuntia ficus-indica*

22 *Paulownia tomentosa*

23 *Phytolacca americana*

24 *Pontederia crassipes*

25 *Prunus serotina*

26 *Pueraria montana*

27 *Reynoutria japonica*

28 *Rhododendron ponticum* subsp. b.

29 *Ricinus communis*

30 *Robinia pseudoacacia*

31 *Rosa rugosa*

32 *Senecio inaequidens*

33 *Solidago canadensis*

34 *Sorghum halepense*

35 *Trachycarpus fortunei*