

The role of hybridization in plant invasions

Centurea jacea and *C. nigra* are introduced and invasive in North America. The species hybridize in its native range in Europe. There are indications that the hybrid also exists in North America and that it is more invasive than either of the two parent species. In this project we will investigate *C. jacea* and *C. nigra* and their hybrid both from Europe and North America to determine if the hybrid in North America is of European origin or if the two parent species hybridizes in the invasive region. The project will involve both genetic analyses and experimental tests of fitness parameters. This project is a joint project with professor Jane Molofsky at University of Vermont and will fully or in part be done at the University of Vermont.

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