7th Grade Informational: Non-Native Plants

Task Prompt: Write an explanatory article to explain why some non-native plants succeed in new environments while others become nuisances. Using more than one source, select the most relevant information to support your thesis/controlling idea about non-native plants.

Dangerous Plants?

Imagine eating some pasta at a restaurant, now imagine eating some apple pie for desert, now imagine selling some sweet honeysuckle. What do these things all have in common? Tomatoes for pasta, apples for apple pie, and honeysuckle are all non-native to America. What does that mean? More specifically, apples, tomatoes, and honeysuckle are all "non-native plants." Non-native plants are plants that were introduced to different habitats; or in other words, are not native to the habitats that they currently inhabit. Some non-native plants succeed in their new environments, however, some non-native plants end up becoming well-known nuisances, or even dangerous things to avoid. If the non-native plant thrives and eliminated other organisms, it is classified as an invasive plant.

For starters, the tomato was native to North America; more specifically it was native to Mexico. In the early seventeen-hundreds, Spanish explorers discovered that the Aztecs had been cultivating tomato for years [Source #4]. Unsurprisingly, the Spanish brought the tomato back to Europe where it, at first, didn't succeed. First, people were afraid to eat tomatoes because of the fact that when their cattle ate it, their cattle often died [Sources #4]. This shows how a non-native plant was used incorrectly, and it gained reputation for being dangerous.

In contrast, it wasn't until the mid-1800s that the tomatoes became popular [Source #4]. The popularity kept increasing, and eventually became the most popular fruit in the entire world. Currently, there are over 60 million tons produced and eaten around the world per year [Source #4]. This is an example of how a non-native plant succeeded in its new environment by being produced and used by people.

Sometimes, a non-native plant can be hazardous to other species of animals, plants, and humans. For instance, a non-native plant can become an invasive plant. An invasive plant is a plant that thrives outside of its natural habitat. Even more so, it can likely cause harm to the ecosystem that it is in [Source #1]. These "invasive species" can definitely be classified as non-native nuisances.

An example of an invasive plant is the honeysuckle. The honeysuckle is known for its sweet smell and beautiful flowers. What some people may not know is that the honeysuckle was actually introduced into America, and such, it is a non-native plant. Even further, the honeysuckle is an invasive species. It is known that it can quickly eliminate other plants in native forests [Source #1].

That being said, sometimes ecosystems may need diversity among their plants. Sometimes non-native, and invasive plants can be good, but sometimes they can be bad. In addition to diversity, plants can also be bad if the diversity starts to upset the natural balance. [Source #1]

Some non-native plants succeed in their new environments, however, some nonnative plants end up becoming well-known nuisances, or even dangerous things to avoid. If the non-native plant thrives and eliminates other organisms it is classified as an invasive plant. Sometimes its hard to remember what some of the worlds favorite dishes ingredients actually originated from the other side of the globe, but one thing is for sure: non-native or native, each plant is important to our ecosystem in one way or another.