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.

Invasive Species

When humans travel the world, they sometimes don't realize how they are changing the ecosystem. On your flight to another continent, you may be carrying over one little critter that crawled into your suitcase. What you may not realize is the possibility of that critter reproducing and thriving until it has created an invasive species in a foreign ecosystem. For better or for worse, there are many non-native species in an ecosystem.

The sound of the word "invasive species" gives off a negative connotation. Although these non-native species can be harmful, in many cases they are not. According to source one, some species do not grow as fast as others, and can easily be managed so that they don't cause issues. Some species have been in this continent for so long, you wouldn't expect them to be an invasive species, and may be in your neighborhood. Examples include tulips, wheat, and apples. As stated by source two, there are 22,000 non-native plants in New Zealand, but a total of three extinctions, proving the extinction is not a problem with non-native species. Non-native species are not always harmful, and can actually help maintain diversity in ecosystems. With other non-native plants, ecosystems can have more balance. The problem is preventing these species from growing out of control and upsetting the balance instead of helping it.

As non-native species move into new ecosystems, they disturb the native species, and can cause them to die. According to source one, if an animal relies on a certain native plant and the plant is disrupted by a non-native species, the animal will have to move to a new ecosystem to find food. As you can see, invasive species can cause a chain reaction of unfortunate events. When non-native species grow too aggressively, they kill the other plants in that ecosystem and take over.

Even with problematic non-native species, there are still ways to prevent them from growing too far. As stated in source three, a man in North Carolina has found an answer to his kudzu weed problem. He bought fifty goats to graze his invasive species covered land in hopes that he can grow there in a few years. But you don't have to go that far to tame the non-native species in your backyard. Simply by trimming and cutting your plants you can enjoy them without the plants taking over your land.

With this information presented before you, it is clear the pros and cons of non-native species. I hope you have learned more about non-native plants, and how to control them. With this knowledge of

non-native species, you can better understand your ecosystem and the ecosystems around you. Finding out how our ecosystem works is one of the first steps in improving our environment.