

Online Interactive Weed Identification Program

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Pest identification is the first step in the development of an early detection, rapid response, and eradication program. To increase the ability for individuals to identify invasive plants found in California, we have developed a simple, interactive web-based tool. This online invasive plant identification tool is based on the program already developed for weeds of California and Wisconsin. This tool will facilitate training of weed science professionals, land managers, students, and volunteers in each region of the state. It is also easily used by growers, ranchers, and homeowners. The program has been widely tested and has proven to be simple enough to use by individuals with minimal botanical experience.

The program has a central database located at the University of Wisconsin and is set up to allow us to enter weed species information to the database remotely, thus limiting upkeep costs for the database. For California, the current online program is available at the Weed Research and Information Center website (wric.ucdavis.edu) and contains 463 species (338 broadleaf, 95 grasses or grass-like species, and 30 woody weeds). Each characteristic consists of a drop down box with choices and the question marks can be used to provide explanations for characteristics.

While the Weed Research and Information Center houses a more extensive number of weeds within the state, it is possible for any organization or agency to also set up a website for their group that contains specific species of concern to their employees. This could include invasive plant organization, irrigation districts, Departments of Transportation, Forest Service districts, nursery organizations, herbicide manufacturers, and many others that require specific training on weeds for their employees or members. This can be accomplished by contacting the authors and providing a set of weeds of interest.