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Plant ecologist to talk about invasives

Removal of plants not enough, University of Denver professor says

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (April 28, 2005) – A plant ecologist from Denver will talk about the role and responsibility of botanic gardens in fighting invasive species during a presentation at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Dr. Anna Sher, an assistant professor at the University of Denver and director of research, herbaria and records at the Denver Botanic Gardens, will speak at noon Friday, April 29, in the first floor lecture room of the Monsanto Building, 4344 Shaw Ave., St. Louis.

“My main emphasis will be about research that looks into how we remove invasives and repair the ecosystem,” Sher said. “It’s not enough to spray a little weed killer and expect beautiful native plants to take their place.”

Sher’s research emphasis has been on invasives since she began studying in New Mexico about the invader salt cedar (*Tamarix*), which can take over riverbanks and absorb and lose great amounts of water through transpiration.

Sher was invited to speak to researchers at the Missouri Botanical Garden and other interested parties by the Center for Plant Conservation, a network of 33 botanical gardens engaged in the preservation and restoration of native plants in the United States. Sher is a CPC contact because of her affiliation with the Denver Botanic Gardens, a CPC participating institution.

Non-native invasive species have been getting attention lately since the airing of the National Geographic’s “Strange Days on Planet Earth,” which is hosted and narrated by actor Edward Norton. CPC had a role in the series’ supplemental material on the Internet, providing a web directory of organizations committed to fighting invasives.

“I think this attention is very warranted and really welcome. I applaud the CPC for its collaboration on this project,” Sher said of the series, which also looks at global warming, large animal predators, and water pollution.

“The real story has not been told (about invasives),” Sher said. “It’s not just about demonizing a plant. It’s not the plant’s fault. It’s our poor management of the ecosystem.

The invader is the symptom of a disease we need to be treating at its core.”

On the Net:

<http://www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives>

<https://portfolio.du.edu/pc/port?portfolio=asher>

<http://www.pbs.org/strangedays>

www.centerforplantconservation.org