



Finvasive (VieKas) LIFE (2018–2023)

RAISING IAS AWARENESS IN FINVASIVE LIFE

Markus Seppälä, IAS specialist
markus.seppala@sll.fi

Titta Vikstedt, project coordinator
titta.vikstedt@sll.fi



Communication started with choosing the focus species

- **Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)** – Widely known, easy to identify, easy and control methods, fast results after decision to control.
→ **Perfect entry-level IAS species**
- **Invasive Hogweeds (*Heracleum* sp.)** – Widely known, reputation for possible health risk, seeds spread in flowing water & wind and with animals.
→ **Successful eradication requires regional (vs. local) focus and cooperation.**
- **Yellow/American Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*)**. – Not well known in Finland, along with other rare but established invasive plant species in Finland. Spreads aggressively in wetlands and along streams and dikes.
→ **Demonstrates the importance and cost-effectiveness of early detection and rapid response eradication measures**

Finvasive LIFE focus groups & why we chose them

The municipalities & local officials

- The foremost landowners in their area = the biggest challenges with IAS management
- The landowners with the most neighbours → interest to contact, do communication and activate the locals or neighbouring municipalities in IAS co-operation
- Have usually the best resources to do long-term measures in IAS prevention or eradication.
- “Gate-keeper” (or key decision-maker) staff members important to convince on importance of IAS management.

“The general public”, especially home gardeners and private landowners

- Home and professional gardens are most significant source of IAS dispersal in the Nordic countries*
 - Educating home and land owners is essential in preventing further spread
- Important to change public opinion against growing or spreading invasive species

* Nordic council of ministers 2015:

Invasive alien species – Pathway analysis and Horizon scanning for countries in northern Europe

How to communicate to: municipalities

Majority of municipalities are struggling with other duties and have not started doing IAS management in their area. They might not know their legislative duties and how to proceed with development of new work.

Teach municipalities management by cooperating in surveying, eradication and follow-up work surveying controlled sites. Invite municipalities to workshops. Offer ready-made communication material.

Workshops:

Very effective way to help municipalities to assess their own IAS situation and discuss options, solutions, costs and possible co-operation with neighbouring cities or regional authorities. 2 workshops with city of Kuopio produced 33 measures for municipalities to adopt to help reduce spreading invasive or other alien species.

Webinars:

Municipalities and other IAS managers are keen on hearing about concrete control methods and are interested in cost-effective solutions, such as the cost of measures that prevent spread vs. management costs of established IAS.

Field trips to IAS sites:

Visits to large Hogweed sites usually convince officials of the importance of IAS prevention and control measures

Signs poster in Soolotalkoot -campaign weeding sites offer municipalities simultaneously volunteer help and IAS info boards

Manuals, communication materials and overall guidance

Ready-made materials help municipalities. Landowner duties from IAS legislation are explained to teach the importance of IAS management to the city staff, hired contractors and local residents.



IAS Workshop with the officials City of Kuopio. The aim was to identify pathways through which IAS are spread by Kuopio's own actions.

How to communicate to: general public

Keep the message simple for the public and repeat it.

Repeat it.

Repeat it.

Our main message has been: IDENTIFY, REPORT, ERADICATE

The general public: Publications, guides and leaflets

- Material to give out at IAS info & weeding events and when meeting landowners.

Kätkie avoimen havaitseksen ilmoituslomakkeen sekä tietoa vieraslajeista ja vieraslajitapahtumista löydät suomalaisien vieraslajivestistä www.viekas.fi

VieKas LIFE -hankesivut www.a.fi/viekas-life

VieKas LIFE Marttien sivuilla www.martat.fi/viekas/

VieKas LIFE

facebook.com/viekaslife
instagram.com/viekaslife
twitter.com/viekaslife

VieKas LIFE

Luonto-liitto

VieKas LIFE

TULE MUKAAN!

VieKasta vieraslajitoimintaa Suomen luonnon puolesta

halvalla tavalla hankittuun, kilpailutettiin, ja - saat VieKas LIFE -hankkeesta

• Luomme merkittävästi suomalaisen vieraslajitietoa
• Vähennämme hallittujen vieraslajien taakasta leviämistä kotuikseen ja vierosten avulla
• Käsittämme vakaavasti karsittaisiin ja puutarhamarjoihin vieraslajitietoa hallittujen
• Rakennamme vieraslajitietoa tarjoamalla toimintamallin Suomen kunnille
• Kehitämme ympäristöystävällisiä vieraslajien torjuntatavojen vaihtoehtoja kemiallisille torjuntatavalle

• Keskitymme torjumaan vieraslajien leviämistä ja torjuntaa
• Tykkää meitä somessa ja viestii tapahtumistamme eteenpäin

VieKas LIFE koostuu Suomen luonnonsuojelusta, Suomen ympäristökeskuksesta, Luonnon Liitosta, Maailmanluonnon liitosta ja Alueiden keskuksista. Hankkeen rahoittajina toimivat mm. Luonnon Liiton kunnat, joihin VieKas LIFE -hankkeeseen kuuluu. VieKas LIFE -hankkeen rahoittajia ovat myös Euroopan unionin ja Euroopan komission ja Euron kautta.

General project info leaflet (A5 size) with "what can YOU do to help" choices.

Torju jättipalsami kotipihalta!

Mikä jättipalsami?
Jättipalsami on koko EU:n alueella laillistettu sädetty vieraslaji. Puutarhoista kasvatetaan jättipalsamia koristetuiksi kasveiksi monivärisiä erivärisiä leikkokasveiksi säilyä, lahjoitusta ja vaivattomaksi kasvatettuna.

Jättipalsami ei saa kasvaa tai menellä EU:ssa kasvatusta pihalla tai puutarhassa ympäristössä. Vieraslajitietoa mukaan kättäminen on ainoa tapa torjua jättipalsamia omasta puutarhasta.

Liikitetään vieraslajitietoa:
www.viekas.fi

VieKas LIFE Suomen luonnonsuojelu

How to remove from your garden –guides for Himalayan balsam and invasive Hogweed (*Heracleum* sp.) species.

Torju jättiputki kotipihalta!

Mikä jättiputki?
Jättiputki ei kasva Suomessa, jättiputkia ei saa kasvatusta pihalla tai puutarhassa ympäristössä. Vieraslajitietoa mukaan kättäminen on ainoa tapa torjua jättiputkia omasta puutarhasta.

Liikitetään vieraslajitietoa:
www.viekas.fi

VieKas LIFE Suomen luonnonsuojelu

Visibility in the field, events, door-to-door chats and phone calls

- 4-person Hogweed control team toured the Southwest Finland during summers 2019–2023, offering free eradication work to private landowners.
- They were featured yearly in local media and gave numerous interviews.
- 2023 they attended local events and contacted land owners (private and municipalities) on the project ending and on responsibility for them to continue the work.



The rental vans were equipped with logo magnet which clarified that the team was on a good agenda. Photo: FANC

The Martha disseminate IAS info through local active members, "Garden Marthas"

- Live IAS lectures by regional associations.
- Garden marthas were educated in IAS information, which they pass on in local clubs and organise IAS events.
- IAS guides (on the right) available at Martha events.
- Yearly articles on IAS in printed membership magazine (over 50 000 subscribers).
- Plus – Due to Covid19 -restrictions: Online IAS course for home gardeners (in cooperation with FANC).



[Etusivu / Paikalliset](#)

[Vanhaa](#)

**Ympäristö | Martat torjuivat vieraslajeja Savonran-
nalla – pienellä porukalla vietettiin mukava päivä
ympäristön hyväksi**



Savonrannan Marttayhdistys ry:n järjestämään roskakävelyn osallistuneet Pirko Muhonen (vas.), Arja Luostarinen ja Maija Vartiainen ovat sitä mieltä, että vieraslajien torjunta on mukava tehdä talkoityönä. Leikatut jättäpalsamin kukat ja kikkelyt varret viehin niille varta vasten varattuun jätöstiaan. Vaikka jättäpalsami onkin kaunis kasvilla, niin sitä on paljon haittaa muille kasveille. RAIIJA HEIKKILÄ

Photo: Raija Heikkilä

The general public:

”IAS ambassador” school visits for grades 7–9 and vocational students

Luontoliitto (or Finnish Nature Association):

- Trained dozens of IAS ambassadors
- Compiled a IAS education material package
- Offered 1,5 h lectures for schools free of charge
- Later in the project lectures were offered also to vocational students of gardening and green infrastructure building.



Photo: FANC / Aino Huotari

Volunteer weeding and information events

- Events provide a great opportunity for IAS awareness building work.
- After season it is appropriate to invite volunteers by inviting them for a “thank you-coffee” to thank them for their hard work and share the seasons good results.



”Soolotalkoot” (or solo volunteer work) -concept

- Opportunity for volunteers to control IAS where and when it best suits them.
- Municipalities also choose and communicate IAS sites suitable for volunteer work.
- Focus species Himalayan balsam, Garden lupine and Rugosa rose.
- Municipalities were offered sign templates (on the right) to craft and use at IAS control sites.



Tack för deltagandet i solotalkot för Finlands biologiska mångfald!

Gratulerar, du har hittat till vår bekämpningsplats för jättebalsamin

Jättebalsamin är en skadlig främmande växtart. I detta område kan du bekämpa den snabbt spridande jättebalsamin genom att rycka upp plantorna. Det viktigaste är att förhindra uppkomsten av nya frön.

Registrerings- och bekämpningsinstruktioner: vieraslajit.fi > solotalkot



Photo: FANC / Juha Ahonen

Plant IAS waste collecting/information box

- IAS waste collecting boxes help municipalities save money in waste transportation and handling costs.
- Boxes offer a platform to inform passers-by on IAS and their control in the area, and how to deal with the plant waste.
- Popularity rose when new municipalities joined in Soolotalkoot -campaign.



Photo: Sonja Lahtinen, City of Vantaa

Sheep munching away the IAS – grazing method demonstration and a media favourite

- Since 2019, dozens of sheep have been grazing on Himalayan balsam in a park in Jyväskylä – and the results have been excellent. During course of the project 5–10 other municipalities have also started using sheep grazing against IAS.
- The sheep have caught national media services' eyes every year, which has helped to deliver the message of IAS negative impacts
- **Dozens of media articles published in total during the project**
- **Effective communicators to the local public passing by the pastures in the middle of the city**



Photo: Tarja Ylitalo, City of Jyväskylä

Moving exhibition – a quick introduction to IAS

Over 70 000 visitors to libraries and other spaces where the exhibition was on display

Exhibition includes basic information on IAS and what to do with them plus introduction to 6 common IAS species in Finland.



HOW TO COMMUNICATE: TO PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

We have activated private landowners to eradicate IAS from their land by offering concrete help! Think of us as “IAS janitors” :)

PRO TIP: Maybe target the more rare IAS that could be eradicated completely. In Finland species like Yellow Skunk cabbage.

Step by step:

First contact and “sales pitch” - usually the most difficult one, you need to convince you are here to help and it is free! State the facts - these species are harmful for the environment and might even lower the value of the property. According to law - it is the landowners obligation to control the IAS on their land.

Face-to-face contact - visit the site and do the job - show in practice how to remove and safely dispose of the IAS. This is the time to establish the relationship - people are more cooperative in person. Tell how to continue with the work.

After-care - keep the contact alive, call annually and ask if they need



Removing Yellow Skunk cabbage on a private property in Southern Finland. Picture: V. Sahi 2021

All of these and more will be featured in our IAS toolbox for municipalities

- 80–100 info "cards" on good practice in IAS management will be published in pdf -format by the end of year 2023. Cards will be in Finnish, Swedish and will be situated in the Finnish national IAS portal, www.vieraslaajit.fi
- Cards will feature effective measures for municipalities to start or further develop their work in IAS management in their area.
- The tool box will feature 7 info card themes, such as prevention of IAS spread, how to collect and ways to utilize IAS sighting data, control of IAS plant species, co-operation in IAS management and IAS waste management

Thank you for your attention
&
Cha Cha Cha!

