

Tips On Hiring A Contractor

Sometimes hiring a professional **invasive plant contractor** is the best thing to do to fight heavy infestations or infestations near sensitive areas. A contractor will know how to use an **integrated pest management** approach, identify and protect **native species**, and safely and legally use **herbicides**.

When looking for a contractor, follow the following guidelines:

- Determine management goals for the invasives on your property. This will help you hire the appropriate person or company. For example, do you want your contractor to develop a comprehensive plan and take care of all of the details, or do you know what needs treatment and just want someone to take care of the manual labor?
- Inform the contractor about specific **habitats** or species that need protection. Some contractors may have very little knowledge about native plant species and habitats. Do your homework so you can communicate areas of special concern.
- Require at least a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a **natural resources** field or an equivalent amount of field experience and training.
- If the contractor is going to use **chemicals**, be sure that he or she is a certified commercial pesticide applicator, check with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/pesticide_regulation
 - Contact the Vermont Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Certification & Training Coordinator to obtain a current list of people who are certified to use herbicides.
- Require a written management plan (check out the Resource hub for "Developing a Management Plan") that outlines what species the contractor will work on, what areas he will focus on, when he/she will do the work, what chemicals he/she will use and a clear estimate of costs and fees. The plan should also include a guaranteed kill rate and what he will do for follow-up the next year.
- Require a safety plan. Make sure the contractor knows what will be done in the event that chemicals are spilled or someone is hurt on the job.
- Check references. Contractors each come with a different set of knowledge and experience. Some may be **foresters**, others **landscapers**. Both may be able to do the job, but be sure you know something about who you hire before he or she starts doing the work.

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