

We call them alien, exotic and non-native.

They are the plants and animals that have arrived here from somewhere else and established a new home. Some cause no serious problems and live in harmony with our native species. Others create major challenges for native plants and animals, and for people.

Plants and animals arrive here in many ways. Sometimes they arrive by accident,

such as when an insect is in the wood of a packing crate or aquatic animals are carried in the ballast water of ocean-going ships and unintentionally released into waters around the world.

Alien, Exotic or Non-native:

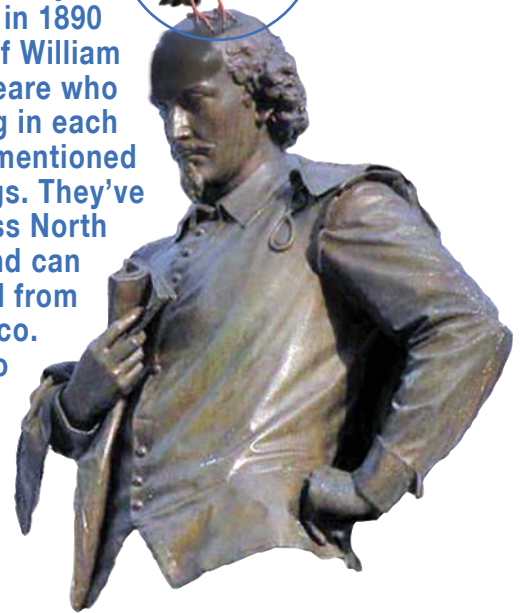
a living species originating from somewhere else



Some non-native species, like **honeybees**, can be very helpful. Some, like **dandelions**, are considered to be a nuisance but do no real harm. Others are like biological bullies. They arrive and take over, out-competing local species for space, or causing great damage. They don't bring their natural predators with them, so their numbers can get out of control. These bullies are the ones we call "invasive." They are very good at competing with our native organisms and winning. They take over and offer little or no benefit. They may even cause a great deal of harm.

European starlings

were **introduced** (released on purpose) in New York City's Central Park in 1890 by fans of William Shakespeare who wanted to bring in each kind of bird mentioned in his writings. They've spread across North America, and can now be found from Alaska to Mexico. Starlings are so well established now, it's as if they are native. We say they are **naturalized**.



Invasive:

an alien species that causes problems in its new environment

Purple loosestrife and Norway maple are non-native plants that have been sold at garden centers for use in landscaping. Their seeds traveled away from the gardens and the plants "**escaped**" and spread into wild areas. They crowd out native plants and don't provide food for native wildlife.

