



## Biofuels May Lead to Invasive Species

As Canada and the US look at some plants as future sources of energy, some researchers are saying there's a chance that biofuel crops can be invasive species. They argue that before these crops are planted, more studies are needed. Biofuels (made from crops) are looked at by scientists as a way to use less oil or gas.

Some crops that have become invasive species may already be here. Scientists give an example of Johnson grass. The plant was grown as forage for animals and has become an invasive weed in many places. This grass has caused many cotton and soybean farmers to lose money. One biofuel crop can grow up to eight feet in six weeks.

A native species can also become invasive through changes in the environment, for example: the removal of oak and chestnut trees along much of the east coast of North America led to sugar maples becoming invasive in

some areas. Invasive species change ecosystems and can cause harm.

Researchers studying biofuels tend to be engineers or specialists who are looking at getting the biggest crop size. Researchers want to see ecologists working with these researchers so that there will be less damage to crops.

To make their point, scientists talked about one case where researchers were looking at ways to use a plant for absorbing pollution, while others were working to get rid of the same plant - saying it was an invasive species!

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