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"Media Ecologies of Plant Invasion"

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In popular conservation discourse, *Rhododendron ponticum* is portrayed as an alien invader let loose on the British countryside by misguided gardeners. In Scotland, eradication campaigns tend to be favored over more pragmatic approaches to management, even though the methods employed can be destructive and long-term success is often limited. Building on recent work critiquing categorical approaches to invasive species management, we argue that such campaigns obscure not only the underlying conditions but also the ongoing *production* of plant invasiveness. We focus in particular on the way perceptual processes shape and are shaped by plant "invasions" over time. Noting that the majority of plant invasions worldwide are initiated by the horticultural trade, and that visual appearance is a major factor in the selection of plants for trade, we present a framework for critically analyzing the visual conditions of horticulturally led invasion ecologies. Working from the perspective of a more-than-human, materialist media ecology, we cast rhododendrons as entities that modulate light, or "photomedia." Our analysis explores how their invasiveness is materially produced via the cultural and socioeconomic as well as vegetal relations in which they are entangled. The site of our analysis is an abandoned country estate in western Scotland that has recently undergone *R. ponticum* removal. By examining the production of visual effects by rhododendrons, cameras, and other media employed there, we identify relations to land that, far from being limited to the period of *R. ponticum*'s "escape" into the Scottish countryside, continue in present-day projects of eradication. This yields critical visual strategies for a gentler, more experimental re-mediation of *R. ponticum* and invaded landscapes in general. (Text from authors' abstract)

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