

INVASIVE AND NATIVE FLORA & FAUNA AT ASB

We often associate invasive species with large ecosystems and communities, but have you ever considered the impacts of invasive species on your local school campus? Can you picture the wildlife that makes its home in and around Barcelona? In fact, we live in one of the only biodiversity hotspots in Europe, and this natural heritage is something we think is admirable and should be celebrated here at ASB.

During the 2021-2022 school year, we (10th grade ASB students: Elektra Sereti, Vanessa Shivprasad, and Cami Blaszak) researched [the impacts of invasive flora and fauna species found on our school campus](#). This project idea was sparked by our passion to learn more about invasive species and their initiative to help save local biodiversity. This project originated from a Science & Service activity aimed towards spreading awareness to students and staff on campus about the importance of biodiversity and identifying invasive species on school grounds. As we continued researching, we quickly realized that ASB was home to several types of full-grown invasive flora plants that would require much effort to remove. The project goal changed from purely research purposes to educating students and staff about local biodiversity, as well as removing invasive species. Currently, we are drafting a proposal to send to Mr. Volchok and the Maintenance Team to remove the invasive flora species, whose status of approval is pending. Also, we are developing another project aimed towards conservation efforts for native mammals: a hedgehog hotel habitat will fortunately soon make an appearance on campus!

Why this project? This project surged from a strong appreciation for biodiversity and a desire to support it in all ways possible; invasive species are one of the biggest threats to biodiversity and sustainability alike. With globalization, many natural habits are being replaced with urban cities. With Catalunya being an international hub, many invasive species are introduced into habits that they do not belong in. For example, the Monk Parakeet, which is the loudest and most commonly spotted bird on campus, is an invasive species that is native to South America. Ultimately, this disrupts the local ecosystems and creates competition for the native organisms which need to be protected. This is a relevant global problem that we cannot individually fix overnight. However, a good place to start is in our own school campus. Eventually, we hope to involve more people in this project and spread awareness about biodiversity, sustainability, native versus invasive species, and other important environmental projects that our partners are working on.

In addition to our efforts to remove invasive species on the ASB campus, in EcoClub, there are many other students with projects that are working towards

improving the overall sustainability and biodiversity at ASB. EcoClub students last year performed this audit to help us understand what we are doing well and what we could improve on to support local wildlife better as well as achieve the Green Flag for Eco-Schools. Together, our goal is to create a more sustainable school community.