

Beware Hitchhikers in Fire Pants

Highlights.....

- Since firefighters are highly mobile during fire season, and many invasive weed seeds reach maturity during fire season, there is a reasonable chance that invasive weeds could be spread by firefighter pants.
- Invasive weed seeds were tested to evaluate the potential to attach to various types of firefighting pant material; twenty-one species were shown to readily attach.
- Results indicate that the older style nomex pants are more prone to retain seeds than the newer styles of pants that are available. This older pant type may have the potential to spread more invasive weed seed to uninfested areas.
- In most cases, a simple, quick procedure like brushing off seeds by hand or with a brush/broom can remove many seeds, and when it doesn't, machine washing does well with all but the most tenacious seed.
- National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Redbook Chapter 11: "Firefighter personnel should clean personal equipment, boots, clothing, etc. of weed or other invasive species materials, including visible plant parts, soil, and other materials as identified by the fire resource advisor. The cleaning area should also be clearly marked to identify the area for post fire control treatments, as needed".



Invasive seeds attached to firefighting pants (meta-aramid blend-right, para-aramid blend – left). (Photo credit, NPS, 2010).

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