

# Pet store disposal guidelines for aquatic plants and animals



Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) infestations can occur as a result of the accidental release of aquarium plants and animals. Introducing animals and plants from your business into the ecosystems in Minnesota can cause harm to our lakes, streams and wetlands.



## Guidelines to help prevent the introduction and spread of AIS:

- **Filter** out plant fragments, snails, eggs or other small living species from aquarium water using a strainer or small mesh net before disposing of water down the drain.
- **Prevent** plants and plant parts, seeds, animals and aquarium or rinse water, from reaching storm drains.
- **Inspect** and rinse new aquatic plants into a sink with a strainer, to rid them of seeds, fragments, snails and fish.
- **Freeze** unwanted plants for 24 hours in a plastic bag, or heat in a microwave and then place in the trash. Composting should be avoided, as seeds and fragments may still grow.
- **Make sure** plants and animals cannot escape or are not released into the environment.
- **Provide information** to your customers on proper disposal of unwanted plants and animals.
- **Follow guidelines** for humanely euthanizing unwanted live fish and animals. Guidelines are available through the American Veterinary Medical Association. Disposal of live organisms should be considered as the last resort

Find the current prohibited species list by searching: "MN DNR AIS laws" or directly at: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/laws.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/laws.html)

If you suspect you may have received a prohibited species in a shipment or a customer brings one in, please contact the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources AIS specialist, Kelly Pennington, at 651-259-5131 or [kelly.pennington@state.mn.us](mailto:kelly.pennington@state.mn.us) for additional instructions.

## Examples of aquatic plants and animals that are invasive in Minnesota's ecosystems:



Goldfish



Crayfish



Red-eared Slider



Chinese mystery snail\*



Aquarium plant

\* Image courtesy of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

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