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Session I – Risk assessment and management of invasive species

ULMUS PUMILA AS AN INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN UKRAINE

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In the present study, we analyzed data about the pathways of introduction, current distribution and invasive success of *Ulmus pumila* in Ukraine. The first centers of cultivation of Siberian elm were the Kyiv University Botanical Garden (since 1893) and the Oleksandria Arboretum (since 1917), probably the wildness that occurred in the mid-20th century. The current distribution of Siberian elm is sporadic across most of the territory, mainly concentrated in the South of Ukraine. Approximately 200 localities have been recorded. Common near cultivated areas, also along railways and highways, forest stripes, parks, forest, fallow lands, etc. Active distribution of *U. pumila* has been observed in the Steppe zone of Ukraine since 1970. Often together with other alien species. e.g. *Acer negundo*, *Gleditsia triacanthos* and *Elaeagnus angustifolia*, *U. pumila* form dense thickets. The widespread of trees, in particular Siberian elm, contributes to the spontaneous afforestation of the steppes. In the Steppe zone of Ukraine the grasslands prevail and spontaneous afforestation is a threat for treeless ecosystems like the steppe. The most typical plant communities with the participation of *U. pumila* belong to 5 classes of vegetation (Rhamno-Prunetea, Festuco-Brometea, Robinietea, Artemisietea vulgaris, Galio-urticetea). The largest projective coverage of *U. pumila* has been noted in the communities of classes *Robinietea* and *Artemisietea vulgaris*. Probably due to its demanding light regime, Siberian elm rarely occurs in forests, but often enters artificial pine plantations. The expansion of *U. pumila* causes overgrowth of steppe areas with plant communities of the Cl. Festuco-Brometea on the territory of Protected Areas as for Striltsivsky Steppe and Yelanetsky Steppe Nature Reserve, etc. The formation of dense thickets and the spontaneous afforestation of the steppes, CSR strategy, high significance of I-Rank (92) for the Steppe zone and Medium significance of I-Rank (75) for the rest of the territory there are main peculiarities of *U. pumila* in Ukraine.