How Much Do We Know About the Effects of Wildfire on the Occurrence and Expansion of Non-native Plant Species' Distributions in Natural Areas?[MAS]

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Invasion of non-native plant species into natural and managed ecosystems is a widespread problem with potentially devastating ecological and economic consequences. Increased occurrence and severity of wildland fires has been identified as a potential threat to natural and managed ecosystems. Wildfire is often linked with the introduction of non-native species and subsequent expansion of their populations. However, much of the information concerning non-native species and wildfire is descriptive and anecdotal. In addition, much of the information available on wildfire and non-native plants comes from research in areas where the native vegetation composition, structure, and natural processes are no longer intact. We have performed an extensive literature search on non-native plant species and wildfire in natural areas of the Western United States. We have synthesized and critiqued this literature, identified research gaps, and clarified the information that is scientifically supported. For this symposium, we will focus on the information gathered on the relationship between wildfire and non-native plant species that is pertinent to the forest, shrubland, and grassland types of Montana.