Invasive Exotic Plants

("Non-native invasives" or "invasives")

What are Invasive Exotic Plants?

Invasive exotic plants are plants that were introduced to our landscape by humans and that interfere with the health and function of our ecosystems.

Why are they a problem?

Invasive exotic plants (as well as animals, pests and pathogens) are a major threat to **biodiversity**, both in Vermont and across the globe. Here in Vermont, these plants interfere with our forests' ability to be **diverse**, **resilien**t and **healthy**, and lower the quality of **wildlife habitat** they offer --- among many other problems. They are also a long-term threat to our ability to harvest local renewable resources like wood and maple syrup from our forests.

Identifying Invasive Exotic Plants

Being able to identify these plants is key to being able to control them. Even if you don't have invasive plants on your land now, there is a *very* good chance that you will at some point. If you can identify them quickly you will have more options for how to control them, and you will be able to deal with them before more extensive damage is done to our local ecosystems.

To make identification easier, let's narrow down the options. The invasive plants you're most likely to see in the woods of Vermont are:

Shrub honeysuckle, common buckthorn, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, Asiatic bittersweet

Once you learn those, learn to identify:

Glossy buckthorn, garlic mustard, Norway maple, goutweed, black swallowwort

Some invasives you're likely to see in fields, wetlands and non-forested areas are:

Phragmites (common reed), Japanese knotweed, purple loosestrife, poison parsnip, reed canary grass

Here are two resources to check out to help you identify invasive exotic plants:

Scan this QR code to check out the iNaturalist app, which uses artificial intelligence and a network of naturalists to identify plants!

Scan this QR code to check out VTInvasives.org, where you can learn about invasives and download fact sheets on individual plants!

Controlling Invasive Plants

Invasive plant infestations will not get better on their own. **If we want to protect our ecosystems, we need to take action.** Even if the invasives on your land aren't bothering you, or don't *seem* like a problem, failing to control them influences your neighbors, our communities, and our ability to create and sustain healthy, resilient landscapes. Depending on the scale of the infestation, taking action may mean making tough choices, like using herbicide in a targeted, minimal way to control these plants.

Here are some resources for how to take action:

Scan this QR code to check out a 1-hour webinar on identifying and controlling invasive plants on the Chittenden County Forester YouTube channel!

Scan this QR code to check out a short video on controlling invasive plants using the "cut-stump" method on the Chittenden County Forester YouTube channel!

Scan this QR code to check out the Nature Conservancy's guide for managing invasive plants in VT!

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a grant program administered by the NRCS, of the USDA. EQIP provides grant funding for private landowners to improve wildlife habitat, treat invasives and more.

Dave Adams, of the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, is available to discuss funded practices and their application with you. He can be reached at (802) 324-6529 or at Dave.Adams@vermont.gov.

Scan this QR code to learn more about EQIP!

Questions? Reach out to the Chittenden County Forester at ethan.tapper@vermont.gov or (802) 585-9099.

To stay tuned about chances to learn more about forests and forestry, join his email list and/or check out his YouTube channel!

Scan this QR code to sign up for the Chittenden County Forester's email list!

Scan this QR Code to check out the Chittenden County Forester's YouTube Channel!

FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION VERMONT