



# Ohio Invasive Plants Council

## Newsletter • Summer 2021



### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Summer is already upon us and there are plenty of invasive plants actively growing to entice us to control them. How many of you drive down the highway, even on vacation, and notice the invasive plants that are present near the road? Maybe you even annoy your family and friends by pointing them out and encouraging them to be concerned! It gets to be an addiction for some of us when we are more concerned with the invasives than the native plants, but we still love the natives and want them to thrive!

We continue to work on a new section for our website which expands on our alternatives brochure by offering more suggestions for alternatives to invasives when replacing them in landscaping or habitat restoration. We hope to have this new page on our website in the next few months. We are also very close to completing a new OIPC display to be used at events around the state, when we are able to safely attend them again.

We decided over the winter to postpone our 2021 Annual Meeting until late summer or early fall. We are happy to report that our Board decided to host a virtual Annual Meeting on **October 15<sup>th</sup>**, likely to be a half day event. Plans are in the works, so watch our website for more details. At least one outdoor workshop is being planned for later this summer, potentially using a picnic shelter for short presentations and then some hikes to discuss invasive plants and control methods. More details will be on our website soon. It will likely be in southeastern Ohio.

As some of you may know, Yahoo discontinued their listserv service in mid-December. OIPC has an active listserv of over 300 participants,

and we recently set up another listserv with Google Groups, [oipc@googlegroups.com](mailto:oipc@googlegroups.com). We welcome people to join this group and make it larger!

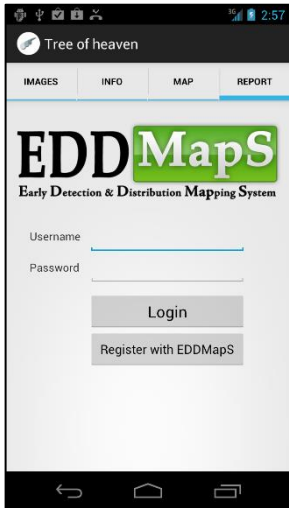
If you are looking for opportunities to help control invasive plants in natural areas, one way is to participate in the Ohio Natural Areas & Preserves Association's Stewardship Projects. See the ONAPA website at [www.onapa.org](http://www.onapa.org) for information on 2021 summer projects. These projects will be limited to small groups of 10 people or less. Many local metro parks and park districts, state and federal agencies around the state may also have opportunities for volunteers to help control invasive plants. Each of us can help to address invasive plant challenges on a local level, even during the coronavirus pandemic.

Help us spread the word about invasive plants and visit our website at [www.oipc.info](http://www.oipc.info) frequently! We are adding some new materials to the website, including a featured invasive plant, or potentially invasive plant. If you need a plant identified or are looking for more information on invasive plants you can contact us through our website and we will respond as soon as possible. If you would like to recommend a plant to be assessed for invasiveness by the OIPC Assessment Team, let us know and we can add it to the list for evaluation. Finally, if you would like to contribute an article to our newsletter about invasive plants, let us know as we are always looking for new material.

*Jennifer L. Windus, OIPC President*

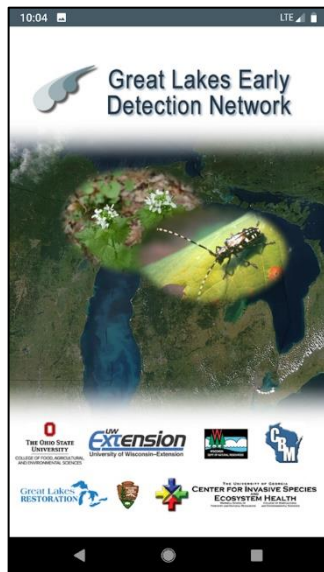
## THE GREAT LAKES EARLY DETECTION NETWORK: AN APP FOR ALL SPECIES

Invasive species are commanding a lot of natural resource professional's attention these days. Whether it concerns insects, diseases, plants, mammals, or aquatic species there is something out there for everyone! One thing that is true across the board is that early detection is key to dealing more effectively with all of these.



As a group of us were discussing our new Asian longhorned beetle infestation in 2011 we kept coming back trying to figure out how to get things reported early when the populations were still few and small. We were looking for new outreach tools to empower citizens to get involved so that they could be our eyes across the state. One idea was

the use of smart phone technology in the form of an app. Page ahead to September 2012 and we are part of a group that launches the **Great Lakes Early Detection Network**. This smart phone app is a tool for citizens to identify and report suspect invasive species. The app contains images and an info section to use as means of species identification. In the reporting section the app allows you to upload an image already on your phone or take an image while in the app (all with gps coordinates) of the suspect and upload it to the **EDDMapS** system. For Ohio users we require images for verification before a point is placed on the map. The reported invasive suspect is



sent to an expert for verification (EDD MapS requires you to register with the system so you can be contacted for follow-up). Once verified, a point is placed on a map allowing all of us to address these issues more efficiently.

Today this app is playing a key role in Ohio's approach to spotted lanternfly (SLF). Volunteers are using the app to identify Ailanthus trees in eastern Ohio (a key plant species for SLF). Once identified they are reporting whether SLF is present. The intent is to create a map that allows for constant monitoring for the pest.

This free app is the creation of the University of Georgia's Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. They maintain the data that the collected with the app and update the app as we add things to the list. To access the mobile link for the app, go to <http://go.osu.edu/GLEDN>.

One thing to keep in mind as you look at the app's 'invasive' listings is that this is a regional app. The intent is to make it a tool useful for those working on invasive species across the Great Lakes Region. There are species listed that may not appear to pose a problem in Ohio but are of concern in one of the other states in the region. Mapping invasive species as a larger region will help us understand population extent and presence can help determine whether a species is becoming a threat. Download the app and become part of Ohio's early detection network! There is also a video available that will walk through the steps to using the app to report. It is at <https://youtu.be/IRSZAQKYI14>

*Kathy Smith, Extension Program Director – Forestry*

*The Ohio State University, School of Environment and Natural Resources*

## ALTERNATIVES TO THE MOST POPULAR NON-NATIVE GROUND COVERS

The term ground cover is applied to low-growing plants with a sprawling or spreading growth habit used to cover areas in the landscape. They are often selected for their aggressiveness and tolerance to adverse conditions which can be an attribute but

also a curse when it comes to potential invasiveness. Many of the most popular ground covers such as *Euonymus fortunei* 'Coloratus' (Purple Wintercreeper), *Hedera helix* (English Ivy) and *Vinca minor* (Periwinkle) have aggressive growth habits, tolerance to most cultural situations and evergreen leaves. These qualities can make them difficult to keep from becoming aggressive in the surrounding landscape and native areas. The OIPC Assessment Protocol identifies wintercreeper as an invasive plant. OIPC has identified periwinkle and English ivy as two non-native aggressive species to evaluate in the near future.

Native plants do not tend to exhibit the same aggressiveness nor the wide-ranging cultural tolerances making it sometimes difficult to find the appropriate native ground cover to use as an alternative to these common nonnative ground covers. We must have much more understanding of the specific cultural requirements that each native plant requires to have them flourish. However, with some researched knowledge of their cultural



Photo by Joseph LaForest, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

requirements and consideration of the attributes of your landscape such as soil properties and sunlight hours, you can achieve a successful native ground cover in your landscape.

*Hedera helix* (English ivy) is a very common shade loving self-clinging vine that is easy to grow with little care. A woody evergreen, it displays attractive dark green, waxy leaves. As a true evergreen this plant will continue to grow even during Ohio's winter months. English ivy will climb trees and other plants covering them and eventually starving them of sunlight which will eventually kill the plants that it covers. It has been classified as invasive in many

neighboring states including Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

An excellent native alternative to English Ivy is Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) - Virginia creeper is taller and less dense than English ivy but looks beautiful in the landscape. It can be grown as a climbing vine or ground cover and will grow up trees and buildings without doing harm. Birds will eat the berries and it is the larval host for several species of sphinx moths. Though not an evergreen, Virginia creeper has a brilliant burgundy red fall color that is hard to beat.

*Euonymus fortunei* 'Coloratus' (purple wintercreeper) is a trailing ground cover which typically grows to 6-9" tall and spreads indefinitely by rooting stems becoming a sprawling, tangled mass of vegetation. It remains evergreen through most of the winter until single digit temperatures and then the foliage will turn to a burgundy purple thus one of its common names "purple winter creeper". Its growing habit to form dense mats and its ability to climb makes this plant a threat to native understory plants as well as native trees. Wintercreeper has been reported in natural areas in Ohio, escaping the boundaries of old homesteads and landscaping.

A low growing native alternative to wintercreeper is bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*). It is best grown in acidic, dry to medium, well-drained soil in light shade to full sun. It also grows well in poor infertile soils. This is a low growing evergreen shrub that produces leathery leaves and beautiful white flowers tinged in pink. The flowers attract native bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. It produces an attractive waxy red fruit welcomed by native birds



Photo by Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org



and other wildlife. Bearberry is a state endangered plant in Ohio. It should be planted carefully in any areas of appropriate natural habitat. Only a few native sites exist for this species in Ohio. It is much more common in Michigan and northern states.

*Vinca minor* (vinca, myrtle, or periwinkle) is a common trailing groundcover with smooth, evergreen leaves. It roots at the nodes as it grows along the ground and quickly spreads to form a dense mats which competes with understory plants and can compete with natives in a natural setting. Lavender flowers appear in mid-May. It is often found in fully shaded sites but it does not climb trees.

A good native plant alternative to periwinkle is Allegheny Pachysandra (*Pachysandra procumbens*).



Also known as Allegheny spurge, it grows 8-12" tall and can spread indefinitely by rhizomes that form a dense carpet of mottled green leaves with purple and white splotches of color. It is best grown in full shade and is a little slower to cover than other groundcovers but is worth the wait.

David Listerman, OIPC Board, Listerman & Associates, Inc.

## VOLUNTEER DAYS ALONG THE OTTAWA RIVER

In the spring of 2019 through the Green Ribbon Initiative's "Adopt a Natural Area" program, Kim Smith and I adopted a small woodland on a hill adjacent to a portion of the Ottawa River floodplain in Ottawa Hills which is a suburb of Toledo. We had two work days in the spring of 2019 and with the help of Wild Ones volunteers and Ottawa Hills neighbors, we were able to make a pretty good start on clearing out the non-native honeysuckle that had been

growing unchecked in this area for many years. However it also became clear how much work would be involved in clearing the area of a variety of invasive species, not just honeysuckle, and we realized that cutting and stump-treating plants in the spring is not very effective because the sap tends to



push the herbicide back out rather than absorbing it into the roots. We still felt pretty good about the amount of honeysuckle that would not be blooming and producing berries that summer.

Shortly before our first work day, I noticed a large patch of lesser celandine blooming at the bottom of the hill. This needed to be treated with a foliar herbicide using a backpack sprayer pretty early in the season because shortly after flowering, the leaves fade and completely disappear. This is a particularly problematic invasive that has recently shown up in northwest Ohio. It outcompetes native spring wildflowers by coming up earlier and forming a thick layer of leaves and underground bulbils. After the leaves fade, it continues to spread and produce these tiny bulbs which make it very difficult to remove by digging it up.

We scheduled three more work days in late summer and early fall and were fortunate to have additional help from two groups of university environmental studies students. By our last work day in November of 2019, we had cut and treated all of the honeysuckle and buckthorn, along with porcelain berry vine, burning bush and privet.

Another invasive plant that we didn't identify until we had cleared most of the honeysuckle was tree-of-heaven. We initially treated between 15 and 20 trees

and thought that was all of them, but in the summer of 2020 we realized there were about 10 more that we missed the previous year. The protocol we used to treat the tree of heaven was to cut slashes in the trunk of the tree with an axe or saw and then squirt herbicide into the cuts. This was successful in killing the trees that were treated which were then removed by a contractor.

Invasive plants don't give up easily, of course, so the following spring, there were numerous root sprouts of honeysuckle and tree-of-heaven that had to be foliar sprayed along with lesser celandine that had surged into the newly cleared area. Once again, a contractor was hired, this time to spray the lesser celandine and tree-of-heaven seedlings.



Photo by Katharin Mason-Wolf

Two years later, we are primarily battling honeysuckle, lesser celandine, and porcelain berry vine. The tree-of-heaven responded well to the slash and squirt treatment and is so far not nearly as persistent as I initially thought it would be. Unfortunately, we also have very healthy populations of reed canary grass and Canada thistle that have spread into the newly cleared area, along with garlic mustard and mullein, so the work to control the invasive plants will be ongoing.

We have, however, uncovered and identified a nice collection of native trees and forbs that are no longer competing with a wall of invasive plants. Some of the existing species are, a very large American elm, pignut hickory, cottonwood, walnut, buckeye, tulip poplar, crabapple, dogwood, buttonbush and American wahoo (the native *Euonymus*), as well as swamp milkweed, joe-pye weed, and several early



Many native species emerged after invasives were removed. Some native seed was also scatter throughout the site. Photo by Kim Smith.

spring bloomers: geranium, Virginia bluebells, jack-in-the-pulpit, wild ginger, and mayapple.

*Kate Mason-Wolf, President Wild Ones Toledo Chapter.*

## SPOTTED KNAPWEED CONTROL IN THE OAK OPENINGS OF NORTHWEST OHIO

Spotted Knapweed, *Centaurea stoebe*, is an invasive herbaceous plant that was accidentally introduced to North America in the 1880s through contaminated alfalfa and clover seed and in soil used for ship ballast. It is widely distributed in the U.S. It primarily invades open, dry habitats and can tolerate poor soils and harsh conditions. It can spread rapidly, displacing native vegetation and is a huge threat to grazing lands, meadows, prairies, barrens, and the Great Lakes Region sand dune communities. Spotted knapweed is allelopathic, releasing a chemical into the soil that is toxic to other



Photo by Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

plants preventing their growth and creating an imbalanced ecosystem with drastically reduced biodiversity.



Spotted knapweed is an herbaceous biennial or perennial plant. A basal rosette of bluish gray, deeply lobed leaves is produced in the first year. In the second year the plant can grow 2 to 4 feet tall. The stem leaves are alternate and become smaller and less lobed toward the apex. The flowers bloom July through September and resemble tiny pineapples topped with a pink ring of highly dissected petals. The tips of the flower bracts are dark giving the plant its “spotted” look. The seeds are dispersed by wind and through anthropogenic activities such as mowing and haying.



Photo by Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org

Spotted knapweed is a threat to all open dry plant communities in Ohio. It is especially a threat to dune habitats along Lake Erie, shale and limestone outcroppings, and the dry barrens, prairies and savannas of the Oak Openings Region in Northwest Ohio. The quality of pastures and fields used for haying are degraded by this plant. In many cases the invasion of spotted knapweed in Ohio is recent and with strategic action the plant can be eradicated from a site.

Working in natural resources at Metroparks Toledo in the Oak Openings Region, I have had experience with controlling spotted knapweed and have successfully eradicated it from some of our highest quality barrens and prairies. The key with all eradication is early detection and prevention of seed inputs. The seed of spotted knapweed can remain viable in the soil for up to 8 years so if plants have already gone to seed in an area, an 8 year commitment is required. The control efforts that I use depend on the size of the infestation and the quality of the site. If it is a high quality site with little infestation we hand pull the plants. Spotted knapweed can be a skin irritant and it contains carcinogens therefore gloves and long sleeves should

be worn. We do not start pulling until the plants are at early budding and flowering stage when they are easiest to spot to ensure that we are getting every single mature plant. Most of the time we just pull and drop the plants, shaking the soil and dropping them in concentrated piles so that if some were to go to seed the seeds would be concentrated and have to compete with each other. This is effective if we are getting the plants early. If the plants are beginning to produce seed we are sure to bag the plants, and dispose of them in a dumpster. In larger infestations we have tried combinations of mowing, brush sawing, foliar herbicide applications and hand pulling. Mowing can reduce the number of plants that will flower and go to seed but it won't eliminate flowering plants completely. The timing of mowing is critical. Plants should never be mowed once they have begun going to seed in order to prevent movement of seed to new areas. We mow when the plants are at early bud stage. This timing makes the plant less likely to bolt and produce flowers again. We return to mowed areas multiple times to pull the plants that were still able to flower. Hand pulling is possible in most areas of the Oak Openings Region because of the sandy soils, however there are some highly disturbed sites with old gravel driveways, railroad right of ways, and road sides where hand pulling is difficult. In these areas a combination of mowing or brush sawing and herbicide application is necessary. The timing of the foliar herbicide application must occur before the plant has begun flowering. If herbicide is applied after flowering the plant still has time to produce mature seeds before it dies. The herbicide that we use most often on spotted knapweed is the selective herbicide Milestone. It is important to follow the herbicide label carefully because it is mixed at a very low rate and because legumes, including desirable trees such as redbuds, are highly susceptible to its effects.

With dedication and diligence we have been able to celebrate eradication on 6 sites in ecologically significant natural areas at Metroparks Toledo. I cannot stress enough the importance of early detection and rapid response as the most critical component of our management plan for this species.

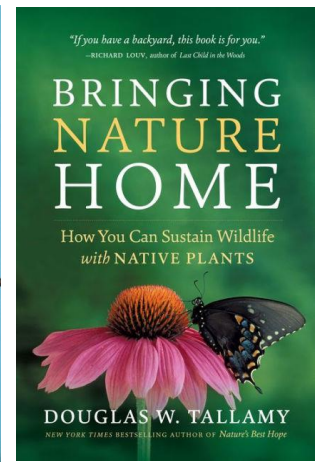
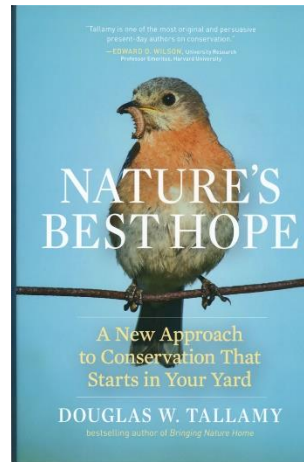
*LaRae Sprow, OIPC Board & Metroparks Toledo*

## WHY REPLACE INVASIVE PLANTS IN YOUR LANDSCAPING?

Most of us probably have some invasive plants in our landscaping, likely ones that were there when we moved in and we just have not removed them yet. Some of us may even like a few of the invasive plants and don't want to remove them. Maybe we have a slow plan to remove them and replace them with better native plants. Removing invasive plants and replacing them with native plants is a good approach to increase wildlife and plant diversity. Native species will benefit from the effort and your backyard will be enhanced. There are many good resources available to gain more awareness on this topic including various websites, National Wildlife Federation, Soil & Water Conservation Districts in Ohio, and several Divisions in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources such as Natural Areas & Preserves and Wildlife. There are also many good books on the topic that are excellent references, such as Douglas Tallamy's books, *Bringing Nature Home* (2007) and *Nature's Best Hope* (2019).

In Tallamy's first book on this subject, he provides many good examples of how native plants sustain wildlife in our gardens. He makes a compelling argument that non-native plants do not sustain native birds and insects thereby reducing native biodiversity throughout our ecosystems. He encourages gardeners to favor native plants which will then favor native butterflies, moths, birds, and other wildlife. In his most recent book, *Nature's Best Hope*, Tallamy makes a stronger argument that it is really the small and large private lands that will make a difference long-term for biodiversity conservation. With more than 83% of the land in the US in private ownership, public lands will not be sufficient to protect the diversity of species and ecosystems. He suggests that each of us can make a difference and change starts in your own backyard. Sometimes the control of invasive plants, especially on public lands, seems daunting and overwhelming, but if we start in small bits and prioritize our efforts, we can slowly make a difference. It can be visible and effective even on a small scale in our backyard.

I encourage you to read Tallamy's books or attend one of his lectures. We can all make a difference and



be a part of protecting biodiversity. It can be on your own properties, no matter the size, or by volunteering to help on public lands. There are many good native alternatives to invasive plants and OIPC encourages you to be proactive by removing the most invasive plants on your property. We are available to help by identifying what invasives you may have and recommending good replacements.

*Jennifer Windus, OIPC Board President*

### SAVE THE DATE! OIPC ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 15, 2021

We will be holding our Annual Meeting virtually this year. Details will be on the OIPC website soon. It will be a FREE ½ day event and have several speakers focused on invasive plant issues relevant to Ohio.

## 2 EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT OIPC!



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#23916 Cincinnati Region (includes Dayton and Lima)  
#47319 Great Lakes / Columbus region (rest of Ohio)

### OIPC Thanks You for Your Support!

*The Ohio Invasive Plants Council coordinates statewide efforts and direction to address the threats of invasive species to Ohio's ecosystems and economy by providing leadership and promoting stewardship, education, research, and information exchange.*



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