Ohio Invasive Plants Council

Newsletter • Winter 2025

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Spring is just around the corner but with continued cold temperatures and snow, especially in the snowbelt region of northeast Ohio, there is still time to focus on new 2025 goals and projects. Winter is a great time for planning new invasive control efforts and native landscaping goals but it does not mean you have to stop controlling invasives. During the warmer winter days, controlling invasive woody plants using cut-stump treatments or basal bark treatments can be a great way to beat the winter blues.

We are busy planning the 2025 OIPC Annual Meeting to celebrate our 20th anniversary. It will be held on Wednesday, February 19th at the HopeWood Pines Camp, just north of Marengo on State Route 61. Visit our website to registration and to find the exciting agenda for the event. Let us know if you are interested in being a sponsor. We hope to see you there.

OIPC held an invasive plant workshop at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes on December 3rd. See an article in this issue for more details on this workshop.

Be sure to join our listserv with Google Groups, oipc@googlegroups.com. The group is a great way to share information on invasive plants, upcoming events, ask questions, and celebrate invasive control wins with a connected group of people that care about how invasive plants impact our natural communities.

We encourage you to check out the new page on the OIPC website, *Invasive Alternatives*, found under the *Invasive List* tab in the menu. You will find information on 22 different invasive plants, with 3-10 suggested alternative species to replace the invasives. We include brief descriptions of the invasive plants and photographs of many of the alternative species we recommend. We hope this new information, which supplements our brochure on alternatives, will be useful to you.

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 for information on volunteer projects. Many local metro parks and park districts, state and federal agencies around the state also have opportunities for volunteers to help control invasive plants. Each of us can help to address invasive plant challenges on a local level.

Help us spread the word about invasive plants and visit our website at www.oipc.info frequently! 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 or an appropriate restoration project, let us know as we are always looking for new material.

- Jennifer Windus, OIPC Board President

Celebrate 20 Years With Us!

OIPC Annual Meeting Feb 19th

Where: HopeWood Pines Camp, Marengo Ohio

Registration is still open. Last chance to register is Feb 16th.
Eventbright Registration **here**

Cost: $45.00 Includes lunch.
Students $20.00

The day includes research and management updates, learning to cook with invasive plants, public gardens as sentinels against invasive plants, crab apple talk, and OIPC Updates.

We hope to see you there!

Plants on the March

As the climate changes, plants as well as entire ecosystems shift to more suitable parts of the landscape to accommodate life cycle requirements of each species. This is not a new story as the climate has changed back and forth subtly over time for millennia. Most plants can spread by seed dispersal over time to new habitats or they must adapt to these changes by favoring one set of genetic variation over another. A record of these adaptations is preserved in the expressed and dormant genes of plant species. However, climate can change suddenly and dramatically as it has done many times in Earth's past. If changes occur too rapidly, plant species may not be able to disperse or adapt quickly enough to maintain viability within the habitat they occupy and fade from existence there.

Native plants are characterized by a spectrum of adaptations. Some species have broad adaptability and can survive a wide range of habitat conditions while other species have limited adaptability due to narrow habitat requirements especially near the edge of their ranges. We often refer to these

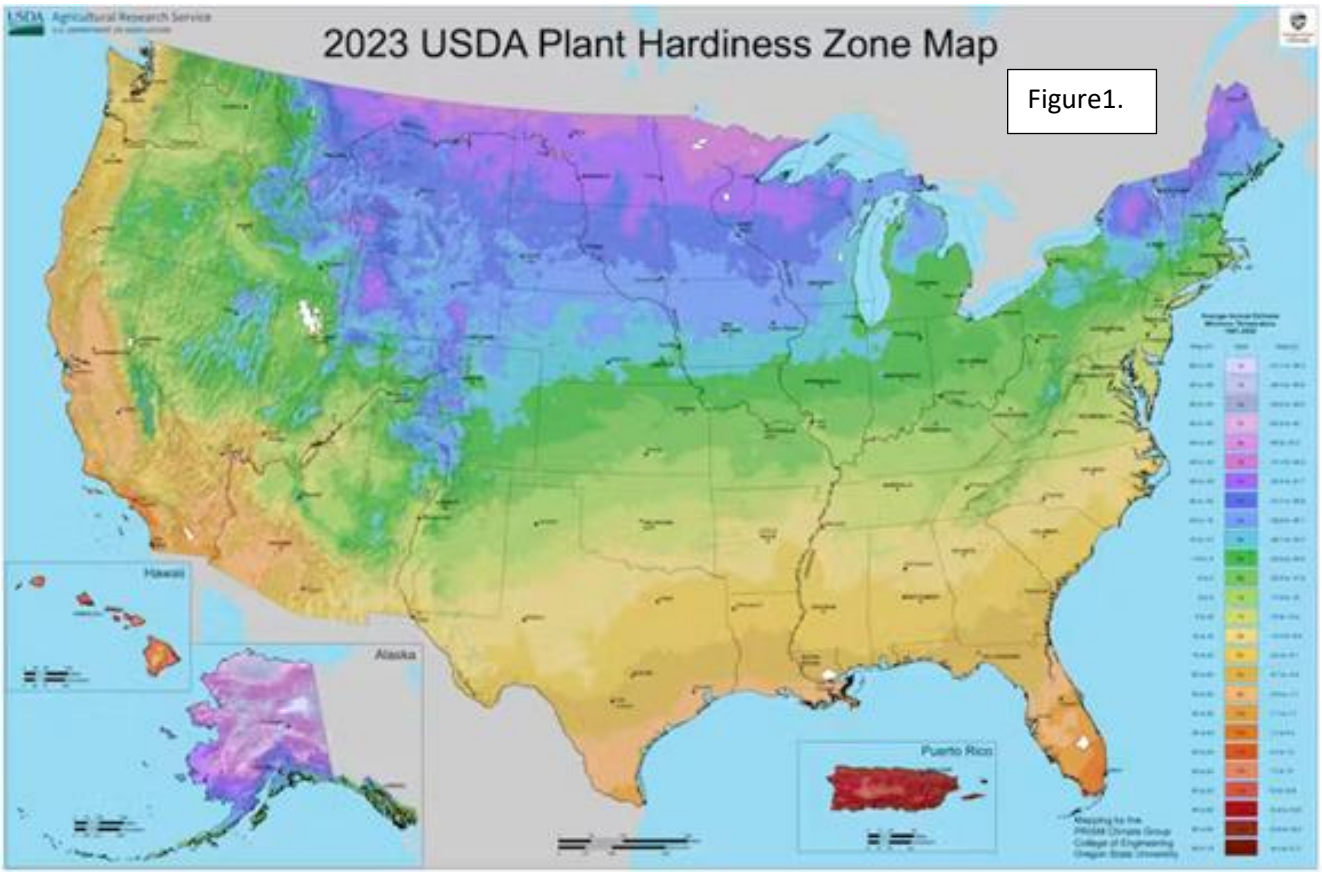


Figure1.

differences by describing them in terms of generalist or sensitive species, which can vary from one place to another representing different plant communities. Here in Ohio, we have terrific examples of sensitive remnant plant communities that represent past climate conditions that were dissimilar to our current climate. Many of our State Nature Preserves protect patches of ancient prairies, hemlock gorges, glacial fens, or isolated ridgetop forests comprised of species familiar to the Appalachian Mountains. These natural areas are populated with species near the edge of their ranges as the habitat conditions have narrowed over time.

Native plant species provide us with an opportunity to monitor and evaluate the impacts of modern climate change. As temperatures continue to increase, niche habitat conditions that maintain sensitive plant communities have begun to shift causing stress that is degrading these communities, leading some species to disappear altogether. This is evident in northern ranging species that are experiencing declines in the southernmost parts of their range here in Ohio. Likewise, species with a more southern range have been observed migrating northward year after year.

The US Geological Survey has been documenting the movement of some of these species as a means of tracking and quantifying the rate of ecosystem shift. They have suggested that modern climatic change is causing habitats to shift northward by 5 miles or more each year. One of the species being tracked is the American holly (*Ilex opaca*). The publication of *Woody Plants of Ohio* by E. Lucy Braun in 1960, placed the range of American holly in only 2 locations near the southernmost point in Ohio. Today, it is known to occur all the way to Lake Erie and beyond. Certainly, some of this is due to introduction, but a progression in age class is notable north to south.

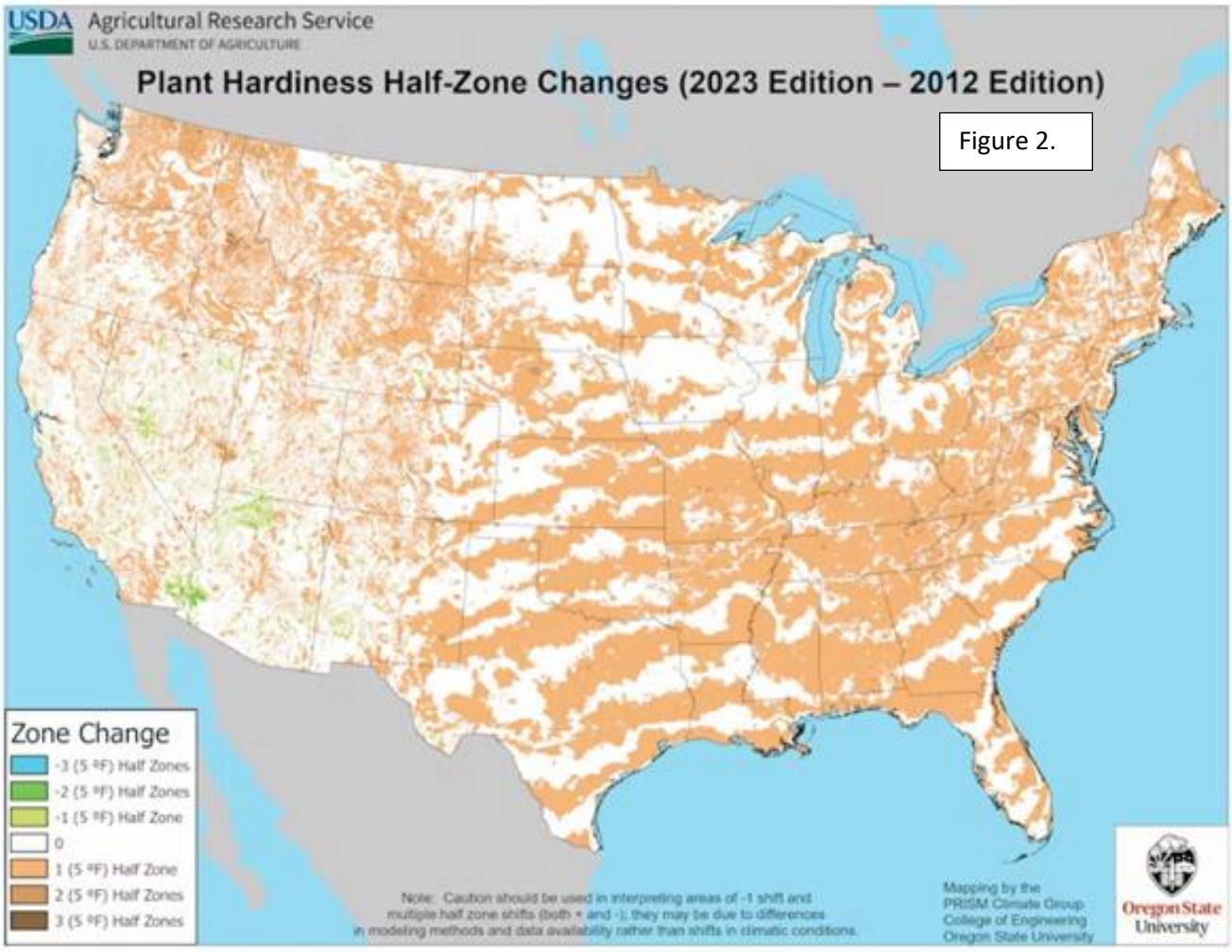


Figure 2.

In response to obvious changes in our climate, the US Department of Agriculture revised the Plant Hardiness Zone Map in 2023 (Figure 1). The revision was based on clear trends in the 30-year average of annual extreme minimum winter temperatures. The previous plant hardiness map of 2012 was changed to reflect the new climatic conditions that may affect agricultural production as well as ecosystem services. The changes vary from region to region. However, it represents a clear shift northward for most of the country as seen in Figure 2.

Given clear indication that climate change is forcing ecosystems progressively northward, it is evident that pest species occurring south of the Ohio River are expected to invade our landscape in the coming decades. We have already observed occurrences of Kudzu (*Pueraria montana var. lobate*) expanding and increasing in occurrence in southern Ohio. The Ohio Invasive Plants Council is working with researchers to determine which species may find suitable opportunities to establish here in Ohio so we can be vigilant to changes in threats to our ecosystems. Future articles will focus on potentially invasive plant species that may pose a threat to our ecosystems as conditions continue to change.

- *Gary Conley, OIPC Board Vice-President & GreenReach LLC.*

Yellow Flag Iris: An Invasive Ornamental

Scientific Name: *Iris pseudacorus*

Other common names: water flag, European yellow iris, pale-yellow iris

Invasive status: Yellow flag Iris is listed as invasive in many US states and Canada and in Ohio is regulated as invasive by the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

Description: The yellow flag iris blooms in the spring. It has 3 yellow petals and 3 yellow showy sepals with flowers measuring 3-4 inches across and the plant grows 2-3 feet tall. It can reproduce by rhizome and seeds. When not blooming it may look like the native blue flag iris. One way to tell them apart without the flower is by looking at the mid-rib. The yellow iris has a thickened ridge-like mid-rib of the leaf whereas the native iris thickens in the center but does not ridge.

Habitat: This wetland species was introduced from Europe as an ornamental plant and is now distributed across North America. Yellow flag iris is found in wet habitats including ponds, wetlands, marshes and even wet ditches. It can survive in water depths up to 10 inches.

Photo bv Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA

Ecological Concerns: Yellow flag iris outcompetes native species and can form large monocultures in wetland habitats. Reduction in native species such as sedges and rushes can have subsequent impact on waterfowl. In some cases, if densities are great enough, the population can trap sediment and alter hydrology. The plant reproduces through rhizomes, rhizome fragments, and seed. Seeds and rhizome fragments can easily travel down water ways. All parts of the plant are poisonous which results in lower food sources for wildlife in areas where this plant dominates the landscape.

Control Efforts: For small populations, digging and/or hand pulling is an option. Be sure to remove all rhizomes. Some individuals show sensitivity to the sap so be sure to wear gloves when managing

this plant. Aquatic safe glyphosate (e.g. Rodeo) is an effective herbicide treatment used as a foliar spray or cut stem/leaf application.

Alternative Native Plants: The native blue flag irises (northern and southern) are good alternatives.

- Jennifer Mansfield, OIPC Board Secretary & Green Acres Foundation

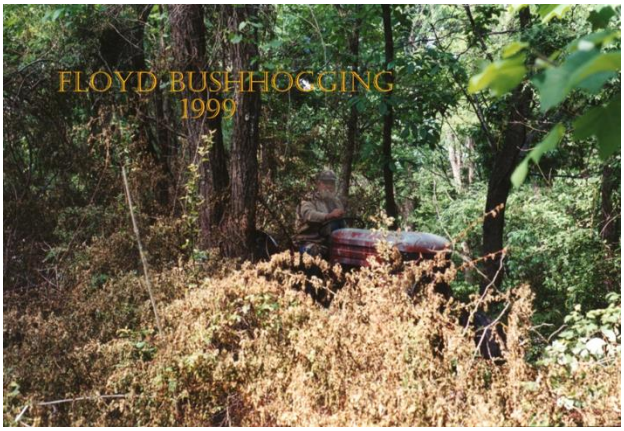
Woodland Chronicle.

I've often wondered what prompted me to purchase this weed-infested fragment of woods in southeastern Ohio, where everything is either ridge or hollow, never touched by glaciers. Here I discovered the two icons of woodland restoration, Quixote and Hercules. Perhaps I was totally blind to the weeds, or maybe I possess extraordinary vision of what 25 years of Quixotic and Herculean effort could produce?

My 15 acre woodland had been secondary oak-hickory forest until 1900 when the enterprising owner clear cut the upper 4 acres to produce hay. Then, somewhere around 1950, the hay farming stopped and the horse-drawn hay rake was parked on a plateau where it still rests today.

Naturally, after the mowing stopped, the abandoned pasture began reverting to woodland. Centuries ago, without continued disturbance, the pasture would have over hundreds of years of natural succession gradually returning it to mature oak-hickory forest. During the twentieth century a problem emerged that interrupted this natural process: many plant species from around the world had been imported and could thrive and grow unrestrained. The 4 acres of my land, which had been clear cut in 1900, became covered with impenetrable multiflora rose, growing over 20 feet up saplings and mature trees, encasing them in a thorny armor. There was a sinister synergy at work, native climbing vines like greenbriar and grapevine formed a scaffolding that facilitated the rapid ascent of multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle. At one spot a cluster of young trees were bent horizontal by the weight of the invasive plants covering them, forming a solid 100 feet diameter mass of woody plants! For several years I sprayed herbicide around the perimeter of this huge mound until finally enough of it was dead that I could cut into it with a chainsaw and collapse the whole thing. Then one snowy January I finished it off with 10 gallons of kerosene, it burned for 48 hours.

On the level ridgetop large black locust and sassafras trees were growing but had reached the end of their normal lifespan, constantly dropping big branches onto the multiflora rose below. This made work difficult but I sprayed the rose with herbicide and hired Floyd to bush hog the dead plants. I could then chainsaw the black locust and begin planting oak and walnut seedlings.



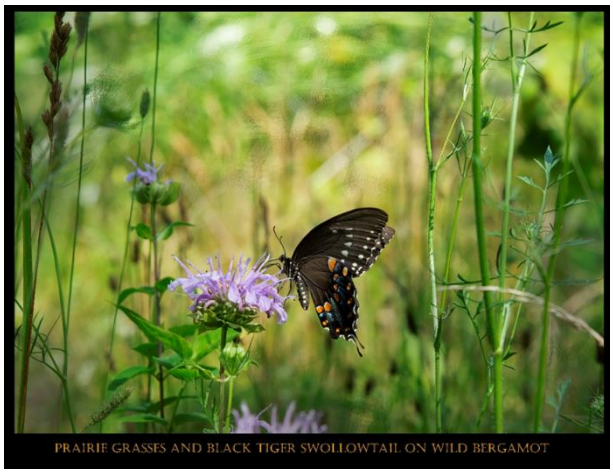
The steep slope down to the ravine to the east was treacherous with 8-10ft tall multiflora rose. To tackle this I started at the top with a backpack sprayer and trampled down the tall thorny bushes as I sprayed. I sprayed as far as I could reach to each side until I reached the bottom where the rose was shorter. Then I walked to a point where I could climb back to the top and begin another descent. Over a period of more than a year I had killed most of the multiflora rose along the entire 500 feet of slope. I beat down the dead rose and made several huge brush piles at the bottom which I burned on a January day.

As I removed multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle I discovered native plants returning in many areas. These included trillium, spring beauty, ferns, and several orchid species. In addition, I continued to plant hardwood seedlings, even in areas which seemed too shady to support them.

Several times I would pat myself on the back for my success in one area, only to discover an area a couple hundred yards away with out of control invasive plants. Autumn olive slipped in under the radar and was rampant by the time I got around to dealing with it. Many of the olive trees were so big that I had to go out with my cordless drill and make holes at the trunk bases and fill them with glyphosate from a squirt bottle. I named this “drill-and-fill” and only later discovered that others had used a similar name for this technique I invented.


HUMMINGBIRD MOTH ON WILD BERGAMOT

I was feeling good about my progress until 10 years ago when my ash trees began to die. I had no idea that I had so many huge ash trees until they were dead. I think of the loss of the ash as a “Triple-whammy”. First, I lost a valuable forest species. Second, the openings in the canopy allowed for release all of invasives in the understory. And third, the fallen trunks made it almost impossible to move through the area to control invasives and plant new trees. The importation of the EAB was another example of a single event cascading into a major ecological disaster. Soon after the death of the ash trees I was gobsmacked by the ferocity of the invasion of a new relentless plant, Japanese stiltgrass. I’ve investigated all manner of control for


PRAIRIE GRASSES AND BLACK TIGER SWOLLOWTAIL ON WILD BERGAMOT

this invader. Yes, deer WILL eat it if you spray it with apple scent or scatter corn at the bases of the plants with a seed spreader. I found the fungus *Bipolaris* causing leaf spot disease on patches of my stiltgrass and I looked for a reliable way to infect healthy plants with the disease.

The great drought of summer of 2024 gave me a spark of hope. Most plants suffered to some extent, some more than others. Even trees wilted and some died. Japanese stiltgrass was at the top of the list of the species that suffered the most. The leaf blades, which are lush and bright green in normal years, wilted under the effect of drought and most plants failed to flower. This was great news! During late October, temperatures were unusually warm and a few inches of rain had fallen. I then saw new stiltgrass plants emerge but little did the grass know, a warm-season annual grass that sprouts in late October is doomed with a killing frost looming just around the corner.

In spite of the difficulties and setbacks which I encountered along the way, I am especially gratified by the meadow and savanna areas which have developed as a result of canopy loss. I find this pollinator habitat endlessly fascinating and is a dimension I had never imagined 25 years ago when I purchased this beautiful woodland.

- Article and photos by Glenn A. Kotnik, M.D.

OIPC Holds Workshop at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes

OIPC held a workshop on December 3rd at the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes in Cleveland. It was a new location for OIPC and we had a great turnout with 30 people attending. The workshop included presentations by OIPC Board members Jennifer Windus, Emily Rauschert, and David Listerman.

In the afternoon, we had a hands-on session to identify common woody invasive plants, led by Derrick Cooper, also an OIPC Board member. The workshop was well received and there was excellent discussion. Lunch was provided by nearby Aladdin's. We appreciated the opportunity to work with a new partner in the Cleveland area.

Jennifer L. Windus, OIPC President

Ohio River Valley Invasive Species Conference
March 19th and 20th!

The theme is "Building Bridges for Invasive Species Management". This in-person event will bring together professionals and concerned citizens of the Midwest to engage and learn about the impacts these species have on our forest, aquatic, and terrestrial ecosystems and innovative, practical, and inspiring approaches to prevention and management. This conference has multiple session tracks and an optional half day of field trips and workshops. Dr. Daniel Simberloff with the University of Tennessee - Knoxville, will be providing the keynote address! The conference is being held at the Boone County Extension Enrichment Center in Burlington, Kentucky, a prime location, just 20 minutes from downtown Cincinnati and within a 2 hour drive of Dayton, Lexington, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Louisville. Follow this link for registration and more information: mipnconference

Help Map Invasives Across Ohio!

Mapping is a critical component of understanding invasive species populations, their range, how they spread, and the habitats that they can invade. OIPC needs your help mapping this list of non-native plants that have limited distribution data in natural areas in Ohio. Our preference is that you use EDDMapS or iNaturalist mapping applications.

- **Black jetbead** - *Rhodotypos scandens*
- **Japanese snowball** - *Viburnum plicatum*
- **European cranberry-bush** - *Viburnum opulus var. opulus*
- **Chocolate vine** - *Akebua quinta*
- **Higan cherry** - *Prunus subhirtella*
- **Crabapple** - *Malus touringo* (also known as *M. sieboldii)*
- **Wineberry** - *Rubus phoenicolasius*
- **Ravenna Grass** - *Tripidium ravennae*
- **Japanese Chaff Flower** - *Achyranthes japonica*
- **Golden Raintree** - *Koelreuteria paniculata*
- **Creeping Buttercup** - *Ranunculus repens* [this is NOT lesser celandine]

Below are links to invasive mapping applications. Happy hunting!

https://www.eddmaps.org/

https://www.inaturalist.org/

https://www.misin.msu.edu/

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Use your Kroger Plus card to help OIPC grow! For your continued support you must enroll annually so be sure to check if your enrollment has expired.

Visit: KrogerCommunityRewards.com
Sign in or create a new account. Select OIPC and click on "enroll." The codes for OIPC are:
#23916 Cincinnati Region (includes Dayton and Lima)
#47319 Great Lakes / Columbus region (rest of Ohio)

Are You Removing Invasive Plants and Replacing Them with Natives?

OIPC is looking for articles to add to our newsletters about your experience. Sharing your story can help inspire others to redesign their landscape or remove invasives from surrounding natural areas so they can also experience the value of native landscapes and plant communities. Please contact us through our website if you have a story to share.

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.

OIPC Board of Directors