



A Seasonal Guide to Spotting Invasive Plants

Asiatic Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

Late Fall: yellow vines in thinly-leaved trees
Winter: red “berries” on leafless vines in tree tops

Autumn-Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

Early Spring: silvery-green leaves before other shrubs leaf out

Black Locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)

Late Spring: tree with drooping clusters of white pea-like flowers
Late Summer: treetops with lacey (insect-damaged) foliage
Winter: tree with dark brown pea pods and very rough bark

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Early Summer: bluish leaves appear amidst tall, dead, reed-like stems
Winter: clumps of tall, tan stems tipped by large plumes

Cypress Spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*)

Summer: on weedy roadsides; bluish leaves with rusty-red petal-like bracts

Dame’s Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)

May-August: moist roadsides; 3’-4’ tall with showy pink to purple flowers

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Spring: on shady roadsides; 2’-4’ tall; with many white, 4-petaled flowers

Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)

Early Spring: shrub leafs out early; often seen in/near wet areas
Late Fall: yellowed leaves remain on after trees have shed leaves

Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)

Early Spring: light-green 2’-4’ tall shrub thickets in forest understory

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)

Late Summer: roadsides; lacey sprays of white flowers in tall dense thickets of plants with huge leaves and bamboo-like stems
Fall and Winter: thickets of tall bronze stems remain standing

Japanese Stilt Grass (*Microstegium vimineum*)

Late Summer: shaded road/trail; low-growing, unexpectedly lush grass
Late Fall: foliage color may include reds and yellows

Mile-a-minute Vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*)

Summer: extensive but delicate, light green vines climbing over other plants
Fall: after killing frost, dead, delicate, reddish vines may have blue “berries”

Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

Late Spring/Early Summer: dense shrubs with masses of white flowers

Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)

Fall: tree remains green after other species have changed color

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

Summer: spikes of pink-purple flowers on plants up to 10 feet tall in wet or disturbed soil

Shrub Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* sp.)

Early Spring: leafs out before native shrubs; flowers in May
Late Fall: holds leaves till November (longer than native shrubs)

Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea biebersteinii*)

Summer: open-branching herbaceous plant with many bright pink-purple flowers along dry roadsides

Swallow-worts (*Cynanchum/Vincetoxicum*)

Late Summer: leaves golden yellow on twining vines
Winter: leafless vines with yellow or tan pairs of empty seed pods

Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)

Late Summer/Fall: green tree with masses of reddish, papery, winged fruits
Winter: leafless tree with masses of reddish, papery, winged fruits
All Seasons: gangly tree growing out of concrete

Winged Euonymus (*Euonymus alata*)

Fall: entire shrub bright red (especially brilliant in full sun)

There are certain times of the year when specific types of invasive plants stand out in the landscape. *A Seasonal Guide to Spotting Invasive Plants* will help you to learn when and where to look in order to begin to train your eye to recognize 20 invasive plants.

In Summer, three species have showy pink-purple flowers. They are Dame's Rocket (with four petals per flower; flowering begins in May), Purple Loosestrite (with flowers in spikes; plants often in wet soil), and Spotted Knapweed (plants on dry roadsides).

The seasonal guide should be used in conjunction with other materials that give more details on the identification of invasive plants. In the long run, it is wise to be able to recognize invasive plants at any season.

In the Fall, Asiatic Bittersweet, Glossy Buckthorn, and the non-native Shrub Honeysuckles hold their leaves longer than most native plants. Norway Maple trees stay green late into Fall.

Many of the plants in this guide leaf out in early Spring. Japanese Barberry (under leafless hardwood trees), Autumn-Olive (in old fields), and Glossy Buckthorn (around wetlands) are easily spotted. Other invasive plants that leaf out early in Spring include Garlic Mustard and non-native Shrub Honeysuckles.

Red Fall color is spectacular in Winged Euonymus. The first killing frost of Fall gives thickets of Japanese Knotweed a glowing bronze color. The stalks may remain standing all Winter. Reddish, frost-killed Mile-a-minute Vines drape over other plants. The vines may have bluish berries.

Showy, white flowers stand out in May-June. Black Locust trees have hanging, white clusters of flowers. Garlic Mustard exhibits speckles of white on tall stems along roadsides. Multiflora Rose bushes billow out with white-flowered masses that fill the air with a spicy rose scent.

As Fall gives way to Winter, some plants stand out: Asiatic Bittersweet has red "berries" often seen on vines winding up roadside trees. Black Locust trees have dangling, dark brown bean pods. Tree-of-heaven may have masses of reddish seed pods. The tall flowering stalks of Common Reed fade to tan and often stand all winter.

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