



What are Exotic Invasive Plants?

These adaptable plants are not native to Vermont or even North America in most cases. They typically exhibit rapid growth, produce abundant seeds with high germination rates and can displace native vegetation in our natural areas. Many of these “invasive plants” are found throughout Vermont and are posing problems for farmers, foresters and land managers.



Bush honeysuckles (left) are prolific seed producers that readily invade forest land.

Common Buckthorn (below) is a poor food source for wildlife found in pastures, hedgerows & forests.



There are many invasive plants in Vermont but some of the most problematic in forests and upland habitats include woody species such as common and glossy buckthorn, common and Japanese barberry, bush honeysuckles, autumn olive, oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose. Some of the more problematic herbaceous invasive plants in forests, riparian areas or fields include garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, wild chervil, goutweed, poison parsnip and black swallow-wort. Wetland invasive plants include purple loosestrife, yellow flag iris, and common reed.

Why should I Care?

These invasive plants can interfere with your goals for your land and make management more costly. They degrade wildlife habitat and can interfere with forest management by limiting opportunities for harvesting and regeneration. They can overrun agricultural land and make harvests less profitable. Recreation can suffer in areas with an impenetrable tangle of invasive thorny shrubs. Some species, such as poison parsnip, pose a human health threat as the sap from the plant reacts with sunlight causing burns, blistering and discoloration on skin.



Garlic mustard flowers in spring & readily invades forest & open lands. Crushed leaves smell of garlic.

The most important part of invasive species prevention and management is to first understand that these plants are here. Education and awareness are one of the greatest challenges. It is most cost effective and efficient to identify invasive plants early and remove them before they are well established. This is called **Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)**. There are various control options that have proven successful in controlling invasive plants including pulling and various herbicide based approaches.



Control of invasive plants in forest can release desirable regeneration from competition. Note buckthorn was controlled leaving behind oak, ash & sugar maple to grow (below).



For smaller invasive shrubs, pulling up the entire plant/root & hanging it to dry is one accepted control method (above). Typically this approach is used for small infestations.

What can I do?

Work with a land manager to determine if invasive plants are present on or near your land and if control is a feasible option. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide the help of a professional resource manager and funding assistance to help you address invasive plants and other problems on your working forest or agricultural lands. NRCS partners with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to work with private landowners to improve habitat and forest management on their lands.

**For more information visit the NRCS web site - <http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/>
Or call your local USDA Service Center in the phone book under U.S. Government, Agriculture Dept.**