

Conservation Matters

A monthly column focused on conservation education, as the result of collaboration among several area conservation commissions and organizations. If your town's commission or conservation organization would like to contribute articles, please contact Jessica Tabolt Halm jess_tabolt@hotmail.com

Title: Invasive Species – They're Everywhere!

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Many familiar plants in our gardens and fields and along roadsides are not native to New Hampshire. While most cause no harm to natural habitat or managed farms and forests, some do and are considered invasive plants. According New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, an invasive plant is one that is not native and is likely to cause economic, environmental, or human harm or harm. It is capable of moving aggressively into an area, monopolizing light, nutrients, water, and space to the detriment of native species. Invasive plants can reduce biodiversity, imperil rare species, reduce wildlife habitat by eliminating native foods or changing cover or nest sites, degrade water quality, reduce forest and farm crop production, and cause human health problems.

Once established, invasive plants produce many seeds or starter plants that travel by wind and water, animal transport, or inadvertently through human activity. Disturbed areas, both human and natural, are especially susceptible to the establishment and spread of invasive species. In river areas, combinations of frequent ice and water scour, rich floodplain soils, increased sunlight, and water transport opportunities provide excellent conditions for these invaders to establish, grow, and spread.

In New Hampshire, some of the more troubling invasive plant species occurring within river zones include Japanese knotweed, glossy buckthorn, and Asian bittersweet. These species shade-out natives, lower native plant diversity, and reduce habitat value. In drier areas, invasive species of concern include honeysuckle, glossy buckthorn, autumn olive, and multiflora rose. The State of New Hampshire has 27 plant species on a [prohibited list](#). For all the plants on this list the rule states: No person shall collect, transport, import, export, move, buy, sell, distribute, propagate or transplant any living and viable portion of any plant species, which includes all of their cultivars and varieties. New Hampshire lists another 24 plant species as [restricted](#). These plants are not yet prohibited, but are exhibiting many of the invasive plant characteristics.

There are many things you can do to stop or reduce the spread of invasive plants. Boaters, anglers, gardeners, pet owners, hikers, farmers, woodland owners--everyone can help. The best way to fight invasive species is to prevent them from occurring in the first place. You can help stop the introduction and spread of invasive species. Help protect native plants and animals by following these easy guidelines:

- Verify that the plants you are buying (or sharing with your neighbor) for your yard or garden are not invasive. Replace [invasive plants](#) in your garden with non-invasive alternatives. Ask your local nursery staff for help in identifying invasive plants!
- When boating, clean your boat thoroughly before transporting it to a different body of water. Remove any visible plants, animals, or mud before leaving any waters or boat launching facilities. Drain water from motor, live well, bilge, and transom wells while on land before leaving the vicinity.
- Clean your boots before you hike in a new area to get rid of hitchhiking weed seeds and pathogens.
- Don't "pack a pest" when traveling. Fruits and vegetables, plants, insects and animals can carry pests or become invasive themselves. [Don't move firewood](#) (it can harbor forest pests), clean your bags and boots after each hike, and throw out food before you travel from place to place.

Because movement and disposal of plant parts is restricted, viable invasive parts can't be brought to most transfer stations in the state. Check with your transfer station to see if there is an approved, designated area for invasives disposal. Methods such as burning, bagging, drying, chipping, burying, drowning and composting can be effective for different types of plants. There is lots of information available. Listed below are a few of places for you to get the information you need to help prevent and dispose invasive plants.

<https://extension.unh.edu/Forests-Trees/Invasive-Plants>

<https://nhlakes.org/>

<http://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/index.htm>

<http://www.nhdf.org/about-forests-and-lands/bureaus/natural-heritage-bureau/Features/invasives.aspx>

<http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/invasives/documents/picking-battles.pdf>

https://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource000988_Rep1135.pdf

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/habitats/forests/help/invasive-plant-species-invasive-species-education-1.xml>

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) along the Baker River in Wentworth
(photo by Ben Kimball)



purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) at Blow-Me-Down Pond in Cornish
(photo by Ben Kimball)