

### Japanese stilt grass

*Microstegium vimineum*

A, G - resembles miniature bamboo, 2 to 3 ft. in height. Highly adaptable it threatens native plants in areas of full sun and shade. Prefers moist, wet areas like stream banks, and moist woodlands, ditches and right-of-way corridors, and disturbed areas. Leaves 3" in. long, pale-green, lance-shaped recognizable by the asymmetry with a shiny midrib. Small pale green flowers emerge from plant tips Sept/Oct. yellow/red seeds follow- viable 3-5 yrs. Spreads by rooting at plant nodes, or seeds spread by white tail deer, water, and soil transfer.

Mow or pull before seeding. Photo David T. Moorehead, Univ. Georgia, Chris Evans

CWMA River to River

### black swallow-wort

*Cynanchum nigrum*

P, V - milkweed family - quick growing aggressive grows to 6 ft. wrapping other plants; invades disturbed sites covering acres, commonly in old fields, fence rows, road ditches.

Simple leaves - dark glossy-green, smooth edges, tapered point.

Opposite buds, deep black/purple flowers in clusters at leaf axils June-July - small star shaped 5 petal.

Fruits in pairs as slender milkweed pods; Spreads by winged seed spread by wind, locally by rhizomes forming patches. Remove and compost at high heat before seeds open late summer.

WARNING when seeding do not remove - spreads too easily. Photo: The

Nature Conservancy, Elizabeth. Czampata

### What are native plants?

There are many definitions of the term "native plant".

North American native plants are often defined as those plants whose ancestry can be traced to any part of the North American continent prior to the arrival of European settlers.

**native plants** that have a long history of growing in a particular region have adapted well to local climate changes. Their long history of survival, often thousands of years, also is an indicator of their resistance to pests and diseases. Many American native plants serve as a reliable food source for a diverse population of native wildlife.

**alien plants** are plants that have been brought to America from other continents. Many alien plants have adapted well to their new home and comfortably coexist with American native plants. Some of these alien plants, however, are extremely aggressive in their growth habit and have become invasive plants. These invasive plants are threatening the diversity of our landscapes through the extinction of many of our American native plants. Some form dense stands of a single plant, all affect the diversity of wildlife using plants for food.

County Executive C. Scott Vanderhoef



COUNTY OF ROCKLAND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL



Cornell University Cooperative Extension Rockland County



Remove invasive plants from your property only. For more information on methods of control for these invasive plants, for reporting sightings of large groupings of mile-a-minute and for information on non-invasive alternatives for planting, please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Rockland County Diagnostic Lab 845-429-7085, or the Invasive Plant Council at [www.ipcnys.org](http://www.ipcnys.org)

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# invasive plants

### Rockland's most unwanted

Invasive plants pose a significant threat to the biodiversity and natural habitat of Rockland County. Several invasive plant species are well established in Rockland, while a few are new to the area and quickly taking root. The participation of County residents is necessary for the effective control and eradication of these environmental threats. Remove these plants from your property.

### The Newest Invaders

The proliferation of non-native species is one of the largest threats to biodiversity in the United States of America.

### mile-a-minute

*Polygonum perfoliatum*

A, H, V - A quick growing herbaceous annual vine that spreads into dense mats; moves into disturbed open sunny areas - fields, stream banks, roadsides, forest edges; shallow rooted, reddish stems, climbs over other plants using finely barbed stems and leaves. Recognized by its light green triangular alternate leaves, circular leafy piece or ocrea clasping the stem at nodes, and metallic blue seeds that cluster in spikes. Spread through seed distribution.

Remove late June/early July before plant seeds, bag and high heat compost. WARNING when seeding to not remove - spreads too easily

Photo: Britt Slattery, US Fish & Wildlife Services [Invasives.org](http://Invasives.org), Rebecca Norris USDS APHIS PPO

### Shocking News!

One in every three plants is invasive.

# Rockland's top invasives

## 1. burning bush

*Euonymus alata*

P, S – Deciduous - grows up to 20 ft. tall forming dense thickets; invades disturbed areas - forest edges, old fields, pastures, roadsides; two terminal leaves at end of branch point like two “bunny ears”, dark green, smooth, rounded, tapered ends; leaves red in fall, small wooden “wings” along stem; Orange seeds in small orange-red fruits in fall attractive to birds to eat and spread. Pull seedlings, cut and cover stump of larger shrubs. Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Invasives.org. Leslie Mehroff invasives.org Univ. of CT.

## 2. japanese stilt grass

*Microstegium vimineum*

See previous flap for details.

## 3. garlic mustard

*Alliaria petiolata*

B, H - Herbaceous cool season, biennial herb, invades disturbed and wooded areas. 1 - 4 ft. tall stalk, small, white, terminal four petal flowers, alternate, green, textured leaves, toothed edges and triangular shaped. Easily pulled roots, garlic odor when plant is crushed; fruits slender, erect capsules that contain black seeds. One plant produces hundreds of seeds that are wind and animal dispersed. Remove first year plants and tap root. Second year plants pull early May before fruiting, bag and high heat compost. Photo: Chris Evans CWMA River to River

## 4. tree of heaven

*Ailanthus altissima*

P, T - Deciduous – fast growing, can grow to 80 ft., also called Chinese sumac. Out competes native trees; needs light - thrives along woodland “edges” or disturbed forests. Resembles sumacs with compound leaves, composed of smaller leaflets alternating along the stem – Identify by smooth leaflet edges and notch at the base of each leaflet. Peanut butter odor when crushed. Roots invade sewers, foundations, can eliminate other plants. Spring small yellow/green flowers, late summer prolific seeds dispersed by wind. Pull when young to get root; cut larger plants. Photo: Chuck Barger, Invasives.org, Chris Evans CWMA River to River

## 5. japanese barberry

*Berberis thunbergii*

P, S - deciduous – small, 2 to 8 ft. high; adaptable, very shade tolerant, easily establishes in shaded woodlands, open fields, wetlands. Thin grooved branches, straight, sharp spines, small, oval-shaped leaves, green to dark reddish tint; April/May abundant pale yellow flowers clusters of two to four along entire branch; bright red berries late summer-winter spread by birds and small mammals. Pull plant removing all root. Photo: Britt Slattery, US Fish & Wildlife Services, Invasives.org, Barry Rice, sarracenia.com, Leslie J. Mehroff invasives.org Uconn.

## 6. mile-a-minute

“mam”

*Polygonum perfoliatum*

See previous flap for details.

## 7. japanese knotweed

*Polygonum cuspidatum*

P, H - Dense, in large dominating stands - up to 8-10 ft. in height; settles in disturbed well lighted areas - often along roadsides and streambeds; - leaves large, alternate, dark green, late summer white flower shoots arising at the leaf nodes; stems woody and hollow. Spreads through cuttings, seeds, rhizomes. Cut and bag in June; continually mow and cover stumps. Photo: Britt Slattery, US Fish and Wildlife Services, Invasives.org., Tom Heutte, USDA Forest Service

## 8 oriental bittersweet

*Celastrus orbiculatus*

P, V - Deciduous – woody, climbing, tightly circling and, covering large trees. Grows to 50-60 ft. lengths. Found in disturbed areas, field, road edges, limited shade tolerance allows growth in forests; green alternating elliptical shaped leaves, flowers spring, seeds late spring green to yellow berries; Fall scarlet red berries, yellow leaves. Birds spread seeds. Cut, pull, bag plants with fruit and sun bake. Photo: Leslie J. Mehroff, Univ. of CT, James R. Alison, Georgia Dept. Natural Resources, James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, United States

## 9. multiflora rose

*Rosa multiflora*

P, S - Prolific, multi-stemmed, thorny grows to 15' ft. high; blankets fields, lighted forests edges, pastures, open areas – impenetrable thorny dense growth, quick spreading; fragrant small white/pink flower clusters May-June, bright red rose hips summer-winter. Leaves pinnate, compound with seven to nine leaflets – recognized by feather-like fringed bract at the base of each leaf. Spread through birds dispersing seeds. Hand pull for root or mow. Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Invasives.org.

## 10. black swallow-wort

*Cynanchum nigrum*

See previous flap for details.

## 11. purple loosestrife

*Lythrum salicaria*

P, H – Generally 3-4 ft. high., can be 8-10 ft. Invades wetlands – river/stream banks, roadside gullies, marshes, lake shores, wet meadows, prairie potholes – eliminating native plants. Easily recognized by purple-spiked flowers at top of plant, dark-green opposite leaves lance shaped. Millions of seeds June-Sept. carried by air or water. Pull early in season. Photo: Bernd Blossy, Cornell Univ., Invasives.org, Linda Wilson Unv. Idaho, John D. Byrd Mississippi State Univ.

## 12. russian olive

*Elaeagnus angustifolia*

P, S - Deciduous, tall, to 35 ft. high. Invades disturbed areas, woodland edges, old fields, right-of-ways. Silvery scale on leaf underside, thorny stems. June/July abundant flower clusters near stems, small yellow four pointed petals; hard fruit green to yellow all along stem early in season. Spread by the fruit dropping or animals. Cutting back causes stronger growth. Must remove roots. Photo: Paul Wray, Iowa State Univ. Invasives.org, James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, United States

## impacts

### Reduction of biodiversity

- Loss of and encroachment upon endangered and threatened species and their habitat
- Loss of habitat for native insects, birds, fish, and other wildlife.
- Loss of food sources for wildlife
- Alterations to the frequency and intensity of natural fires
- Disruptions to native plant and animal associations:
  - Pollination
  - Seed dispersal

## know your plants!

If you are unsure of the identification of a plant, take a sample to a university, arboretum, department of agriculture office, local nature center, or native plant society for assistance with identification. Find out if the plant has invasive tendencies.



**Legend**

- P - perennial
- B - biennial
- A - annual
- S - shrub
- T - tree
- V - vine
- G - grass
- H - herbaceous

# invasive plants

An estimated 42% of the nations endangered and threatened species have declined as a result of encroaching exotic plants and animals. – According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,