



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
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Urban Forestry Fact Sheet

What are invasive plants and why should I care about them in my community?

An invasive plant is a non-native plant which is capable of causing economic and environmental damage, and harm to human health. Invasive plants are characterized by fast growth rates, excessive fruit production, and efficient seed dispersal and germination. Approximately 60 species of invasive plants have been identified in the state of Ohio and their aggressive nature can cause significant negative impacts including:

- major economic impacts to agriculture and forestry due to reduced productivity and expensive control efforts
- accelerated damage to aging sewers and building foundations due to aggressive root systems
- poor sightlines at intersections and along bike trails
- reduced quality and quantity of wildlife habitat in both communities and natural areas
- threats to human health (tree-of-heaven sap can cause burns, blistering, and abnormal heart rhythm)
- increased maintenance of home gardens and community parks where invasive plants become established and displace ornamental plants
- negative impacts to federally listed threatened and endangered species
- reduced opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hunting and hiking

Invasive plants are detrimental to communities, agricultural production, and forests and should be controlled to reduce these negative impacts. Considerable effort and expense is invested in Ohio to control invasive plants on both public and private forests and natural areas. But these efforts have little chance of success if invasive plants are not addressed in communities where they are also inflicting significant damage and providing a constant seed source for nearby natural areas. Attacking invasive plants on two fronts, communities and natural areas, will improve the potential for successful control over the long-term. These efforts will help preserve the natural heritage of our state which will be beneficial for all Ohioans.

If you are a community leader and are interested in learning more about controlling invasive plants where you live, please contact your ODNR Urban Forester. Contact information can be found at <http://www.ohiodnr.com/forestry/>. Click on Urban Forestry under the Forestry Assistance link at the top of the page.