

Garlic Mustard

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) gets its name from the pungent odor of the crushed new leaves. It grows in forests, along forest edges, riverbanks and roadsides where it competes for light and space with many spring-blooming wild flowers and tree seedlings. It may also inhibit the growth of mycorrhizal fungi, used by native plants to obtain nutrients from the soil. Because garlic mustard is chemically different from native mustard, it threatens several butterfly species who feed on mustard plants. To control garlic mustard, plants can be pulled when soils are moist; sprayed with glyphosate in late fall or early spring; plants that have begun to flower should not be left on site because seeds may still develop. Plants cut above ground level will still send up new shoots.



Buckthorn

Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is a small spiny tree which forms extremely dense thickets. It grows in woodlands, wetlands and abandoned fields. While birds and animals eat the berries, they also spread the seeds and thus encourage the spread of these thorny trees. Once the Buckthorn is established it is difficult to clear. In grasslands it can be controlled with controlled fires. Probably the best way to clear large patches of small trees is with two people: one uses a brushcutter, and the other follows, stacking brush and dripping full strength glyphosate around the cambium layer on the cut stumps. Untreated stumps will return next year with 6 or 8 new trees.

Autumn Olive

Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) is common in abandoned fields and other open areas. Like some beans, the shrub “sets nitrogen,” that is, it pulls nitrogen out of the air and deposits it in the soil, in effect fertilizing itself! A single plant can produce up to 200,000 seeds per year, each in a little sweet berry that birds love. The birds then excrete the seeds a few hours later and plant additional autumn olives wherever they happen to be. The berries are actually quite tasty; one approach to control might be for all of us to go out and eat the berries before the birds get to them, spitting the seeds into a roaring fire. (Just kidding). Larger shrubs often have 6 to 8 main branches. One this writer cut down some years ago was 20 feet tall and only 8 years old. Unlike buckthorn, when autumn olive is cut down, the trunks ordinarily don’t sprout new stems the next year.



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Honeysuckle

Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*) has recently become a serious invasive species. While it has been around for a long time, it's only in recent years that it has spread so aggressively. It particularly favors woodland edge zones, in particular areas where roads border wooded areas. Excellent examples can be seen along Gale Rd and along the north side of Plymouth Rd west of Dixboro Rd. Like buckthorn, this plant is one of the very last to lose its leaves in the fall. This does make it particularly easy to find late in the year; this is a good time to cut it down if you can. The stumps do send up sprouts so you have to treat them with glyphosate immediately after they are cut. There is also some evidence that deer like to browse on the honeysuckle sprouts slowing (but probably not stopping) their regrowth.



Phragmites

Phragmites australis is a tall, up to 20 ft. wetland grass with leaves sticking out from the stems similar to a corn plant. It denies light to lower-growing plants and animals and thus reduces wildlife habitat. It is so aggressive that small ponds and wetlands often disappear.

It is a fire hazard in the fall when the stalks dry out. Two broad-spectrum herbicides, glyphosate and imazapyr, which are commercially available are known to control Phragmites effectively when used properly.



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Note: in this brochure, we recommend the use of several herbicides. We do this reluctantly as it is *very easy* to misuse these chemicals and do a good deal of harm to the landscape. The best way to apply herbicides to woody plants (like autumn olive, buckthorn, or honeysuckle) is to carefully drip the liquid directly on the cambium layer (the layer right under the bark) with an eyedropper. Use just enough to cover the cambium, no more. Excessive use of these chemicals is responsible for the loss of honeybees and butterflies. Be careful!!