



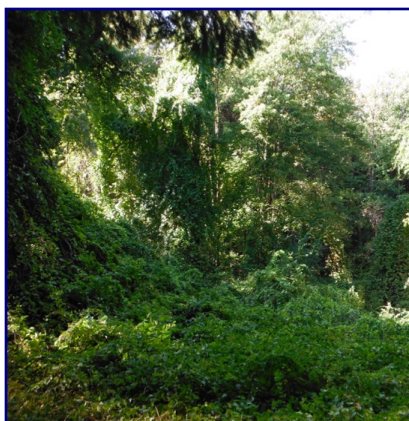
Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

A Program of:



Who are we?

The Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program is a Hamilton Conservation Authority program that works with private landowners to protect, enhance and restore the environmentally significant natural areas and watercourses on their property.



A large patch of Oriental bittersweet, an invasive vine, in the Hamilton area. This plant shades out ground plants and the forest canopy.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

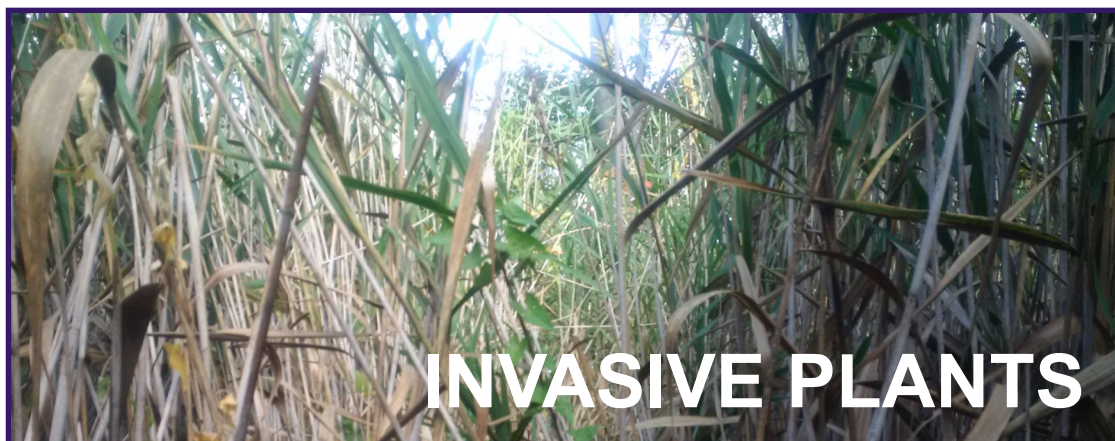


Photo: A patch of Phragmites, an invasive wetland reed, near Lower Spencer Creek.

Invasive plant species are typically non-native plants that have been introduced into Ontario and whose success has a negative impact on the natural environment, society or human health. These species often face fewer limitations in the new environment and are able to spread quickly. For example, a plant species may have multiple insects that eat its leaves in its home range but in a new environment these insects do not exist. Troublesome invasive species often produce large amounts of seeds or/and have very persistent root systems.

Why are invasive species bad for natural areas?

- Invasive species can dominate and create a monoculture (an area in which only one plant species grows). A variety of plant species in a natural area is important for an ecosystem to provide habitat for wildlife.
- Sensitive plants including species at risk have trouble surviving in an area with invasive species; therefore, invasive species limit their habitat.
- Invasive species are very hard to control and remove due to their reproductive traits and hardiness.

For these reason, it is important that small patches of invasive species are removed before they are unmanageable. It is also important that invasive species are not accidentally introduced into new areas especially in sensitive habitat. Some of the common invasive species found in the Hamilton watershed are listed on the next page.

Know what to Grow

You can reduce the spread and introduction of invasive plant species by growing native plants or non-invasive exotics in your garden. Grow me Instead (available at

<http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/grow-me-instead>) is an excellent resource to ensure your garden does not negatively impact the natural environment.

Best Management Practices Brochures are available for 13 invasive species courtesy of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. They include information on identification and control methods. The brochures are available at:

<http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca/resources/best-management-practices>

Things you can do to combat the spread of invasive plant species

- Do not dispose of plant waste near natural areas
- Learn to identify common invasive species in your watershed
- Manage invasive species on your property (*Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program can provide advice on best management practices*)
- Plant non-invasive or native plants in your gardens
- Volunteer at an invasive species removal event
- Clean machinery and footwear when moving between natural areas to prevent the spread of seeds

Common Invasive Plant Species

Common Buckthorn: a shrub that grows to 2-6 metres in height. The leaves have serrated edges and the branches have small thorns.

Key ID: This plant has green leaves long after native trees and shrubs have lost their leaves. This makes it easy to spot in November.



Photo by NY State IPM Program licensed under Creative Commons 2.0

Garlic Mustard: a plant with small white flowers and leaves with large serrated edges. It grows up to 1 metre in height. This plant releases chemicals into the soil limiting the growth of native plants nearby.



Phragmites: a wetland reed that grows from 2 to up to 5 metres in height with a large seed head.

Key ID: Phragmites grows in dense stands and the plants turn brown and stiff in the fall.



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Dog-strangling Vine: a vine with opposite leaves. It creates a very dense ground layer and twists around trees. It is in the milkweed family and monarchs have been known to accidentally lay eggs on it but the caterpillars cannot survive.



Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Norway Maple: a tree usually reaching 15 to 20 metres in height. It is similar in appearance to the native Sugar Maple but has wider leaves and longer leaf stalks. It also comes in a 'Crimson King' variety which has purple leaves

Key ID: Snap of a leaf from the maple and if it exudes a white sap from the leaf stalk, it's a Norway Maple.



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Interested in learning
more about natural
features on your property?
Call us to arrange a free
on-site consultation!