

Invasive Plants Awareness in Ancram

*NYS Invasive Species
Awareness Week: July 6-12*

Ancram Conservation Advisory Council



Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

New York State Invasive Species Awareness Week is July 6-12, 2014. This is the perfect time to increase our awareness of what invasive species are and why they're a problem. This memo highlights selected invasive plants in the Ancram area. **Do visit the NYS Invasive Species Awareness Week web site for more information, key resources and activities at www.NYIS.info.**

If you would like help identifying plants, or finding resources for action planning for invasive plants on your Ancram area property, please contact CAC member Kim Tripp at ktripp2@hotmail.com.



Uncontrolled invasive Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) obliterates the native flora in a wet meadow.

What is an invasive species? Invasive species can be plants, animals - including insects - or pathogens that are not native to the geographical region in which they are currently living. Due to extensive worldwide travel and trade, non-native species can be unintentionally moved from one region to another where they can out compete natives.



Crown vetch (*Securigera varia*) was imported to stabilize soil but can rapidly take over and outcompete native plants.

Why do they matter? Since invasive species generally do not have natural enemies and thrive in their new habitat, they can cause extensive damage to the local environment and become a threat to agriculture, domestic animals, and human health. **It is crucial to be aware of the issue and to avoid introducing or spreading invasive species!**

What are invasive plant species? They are non-native, aggressive plants that overtake natural or agricultural environments when left unmanaged. They can ultimately change the local flora - and fauna- by using up space and nutrients in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems that had been used by native species. Native insects, fish and other animals dependent on the original native plants can no longer find the specific food, shelter or nest material they need and so decline.

Invasive plant species are non-native and should not be confused with naturally fast-growing native plant species (like American bittersweet, poison ivy or wild grape) that are an integral, if challenging, part of the local flora.

What are Ancram's invasive plant species? Most of the invasive plants found in the northeastern US are now also found in and around Ancram. A few of the most common and problematic are: Chinese bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Crown vetch, (*Securigera varia*), Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), Tatarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), and Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).

A few of Ancram's terrestrial invasive plants:



Chinese bittersweet vine, *Celastrus orbiculatus*



Multiflora rose shrub, *Rosa multiflora*



Russian olive shrub, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*



Tree of Heaven, *Ailanthus altissima*

What can we do about invasive plants?

Learn: Increase your awareness and help to minimize the problem. Avoid introducing or spreading invasive plants! Explore www.NYIS.info.

Get help at home: Use regional resources to identify invasive plants (there are many native look-alikes!). Consider an action plan for invasive plants on your land.

Plan before you pull:

Each invasive plant species is best managed by a specific approach. Many are handled by some method of physical removal **but** get advice to confirm invasive plant identification and learn how best to deal with the specific invasive plants in your area (contacts follow).

Resources and Contacts::

- NY Invasive species Info: www.NYIS.Info
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Invasive Species Program: *Marilyn Wyman*, mfw10@cornell.edu
- Ancram CAC: *Kim Tripp*, ktripp2@hotmail.com

Warning:

Some invasive plants are highly toxic to the touch! Giant hogweed (below) can give severe burns.



Giant hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Be careful of native look-alikes:

There are often native plant look-alikes for invasive plant species. Be sure of your plant ID **before** you act!



Useful native sumacs (*Rhus* species) look very much like the invasive Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).