

Six of the Most Invasive Plants in the Woodlands and Backyards of Lyme, CT

Do not plant! Remove them before they spread if possible.

All control approaches are not detailed here. Research best methods.

Japanese Barberry
Berberis thunbergii



A 3' to 5' shrub with long arching branches arising from a root crown. It spreads quickly via underground rhizomes and by seed, crowding out surrounding plants. Early leaf-out in spring and shade tolerance gives it an advantage over native plants. Cut stem is bright yellow. Large thickets harbor ticks.

Mechanical control: Wearing thick leather gloves, pull smaller plants near the roots (watch for thorns!) Pull out the roots of larger plants/bushes with a Weed Wrench or pick-ax. Or cut to ground and burn with propane torch. It will resprout if cut.

Chemical: Cut large plants to ground and paint the stump with herbicide.

Mugwort
Artemisia vulgaris



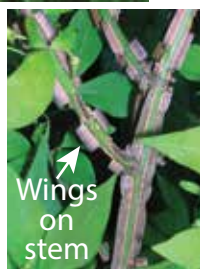
Different leaf shapes on mature plants



Introduced to CT by the earliest European settlers, most likely for medicinal purposes. When cut or crushed, the leaves have a spicy herbal scent. It played nicely until recently. Due to climate change, it has become a highly invasive perennial plant. Its wind-dispersed pollen is a major cause for seasonal allergy symptoms. Grows 2'-5' high. Reproduces via extensive rhizome system and seed (1 plant can produce up to 200,000 seeds!) Plants can regenerate from tiny fragments.

Mechanical control: Catch it before it spreads. Dig up shallow roots. Repeatedly cut at base of stem to weaken established root systems. Cut before July/August seed set. Or smother plants with tarp/cardboard.

Burning Bush
Winged Euonymus
Euonymus alatus



Popular ornamental shrub for red fall foliage. Can grow to 15'. Successful in shade. Extremely invasive. Forms dense thickets, crowding out native plants. Prolific fruit/seed production, which is spread widely by birds. Numerous seedlings sprout around the base. Has distinctive corky "wings" on branches.

Control: Mow smaller plants or pull out by the roots. Cut larger specimens at base and/or dig out roots.

Chemical: For larger bushes, cut near the base and paint the stump with herbicide to prevent resprouts.

Stiltgrass

Microstegium vimineum



Smooth,
jointed
stem



Silvery vein
Asymmetrical
leaf

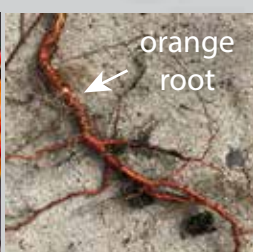


An aggressive invader of forest lands throughout the eastern United States. Stiltgrass is considered one of the most damaging invasive plant species in the United States. Its jointed stem looks like a tiny bamboo. Infestations spread rapidly and the seed can remain viable in the soil for more than five years. Stiltgrass produces seeds at the tip of the stems in early fall. Seeds are also produced on the leaf axils, where the top of the leaf meets the stem.

Mechanical control: Best to pull it out before it spreads. If you see it, pull it! Plants are easy to pull out. Mow or weed wack before it sets seed. Bag for disposal. Or rake up and make a thick pile to smother new growth.

Asiatic Bittersweet

Celastrus obicularis



orange
root

Rapidly growing woody vine that smothers plants and wraps around the trunks of trees. It can uproot trees due to its weight. Can climb trees up to 90' high, girdling their trunks. Spreads via seeds and underground roots. The roots are orange.

Mechanical control: Pull small plants out. Cut close to ground. Larger plants will need a chain saw. Multiple shoots will resprout from stumps.

Chemical: Cut close to ground and paint or use a sponge applicator to apply herbicide to the stumps to prevent resprouting.

Multiflora Rose

Rosa multiflora



Fringed
stipule



Introduced into the USA in the 1860s as a living fence for farm animals, it grows into an impenetrable thicket. One bush can grow up to 15' high and 13' wide. It has a fringed stipule at the base of the leaf stalk and sharp curved thorns. Early leaf-out in spring and shade tolerance gives it an advantage over native plants.

Mechanical control: Wear thick leather gloves. Pull smaller plants near the roots (watch for thorns!) Larger plants/bushes pull out the roots. Use a Weed Wrench or pick-ax, or a pull with a tractor.

Chemical: Cut large plants near the ground. Apply herbicide onto stumps to prevent resprouting.



Avoid chemicals as much as possible. In certain cases, judicious targeted use of herbicide is warranted. Research best methods and always follow the directions on the label.

For more information visit

Lyme Pollinator Pathway official website: www.lymelandtrust.org/lyme-pollinator-pathway/
Lyme Pollinator Pathway is an initiative of the Town of Lyme SustainableCT Committee

