

What is an **INVASIVE** plant species?

Some plants that were growing in the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve were not native plants. They got there because people brought plants from other countries - or other places in America - to use in their yards and gardens because they are beautiful and hardy. Some were brought here by accident as seeds. Not all plants introduced from other places are harmful but some grow so aggressively that they cause major changes to the areas where they become established.

These non-native plants can grow in many soil types and weather conditions. They can grow quickly and produce many seeds to make more plants. Local animal and insect predators are not familiar with the plants and do not keep them in check by eating them. When this happens, the non-native plants become a serious problem when they crowd out native plants and disrupt habitat. We call these harmful plants **INVASIVE PLANTS**.









Motherwort

Information from Habitat Matters: Let's Learn About Native and Invasive Plants. Available from https://www.habitatmatters.org/uploads/9/5/0/6/95066352/coloring_book_-_single_pages.pdf



Habitat Restoration Project Spring 2020 – Summer 2021

Thousand of **INVASIVE** species plants **REMOVED!!**

Some INVASIVE plant species that were REMOVED from the Preserve	
	
Autumn Olive	Garlic Mustard
	
Oriental Bittersweet	Purple Loosestrife
	
Periwinkle	Japanese Knotweed
	
Bell's Honeysuckle	Burdock

Why are **Invasive** **Plant** species harmful?

In general, invasive species are harmful because they disrupt the habitat for native plants and animals. It's estimated that 42% of threatened and endangered organisms are at risk because of invasive species!

- Sometimes, Michigan insects cannot use invasive plants as food and hosts for their eggs
- If native plants disappear because of invasive plants, insects will not be able to thrive, and the animals that eat the insects will suffer, and may disappear as well.
- Some invasive plants have sap that causes painful skin rashes or can burn the skin

Invasive plants are a major threat on a national scale. Across the U.S., invasive plants are estimated to occur on 7 million acres of our national park lands, and at least 1.5 million acres are severely infested. In addition to federal lands, state and private lands are also plagued with invasive plants and may have even higher infestation rates. This problem is an expensive one. The economic cost of invasive plants is estimated at \$138 billion per year and the costs continue to grow!



Privet



Spotted Knapweed

Information from *Why should I care about invasive plants: How invasive plants impact hunting, fishing, boating, gardening, biking, hiking, horseback riding, and other recreational activities in the Midwest*. Available from the Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN.org) <https://bugwoodcloud.org/mura/mipn/assets/File/InvasivesBrochure.pdf>