

In your yard? Quite Possibly!

While nearly a thousand non-native plants have been introduced to New England over the centuries, only a few cause major problems. Some of these were recommended for bird food, wildlife habitat, soil stabilization and landscaping. Some species, like garlic mustard, may have arrived inadvertently, while others, like goutweed, may have been gifts from your gardening friends. Shrub honeysuckle, autumn olive, glossy buckthorn, burning bush and barberry are loved by birds who spread the seeds far from their source. Norway maple was once thought to be the "ideal" street tree, because of its tolerance for compaction, salt and dry conditions.

The plants listed above, and several others, have become invasive, crowding out some native species and altering the habitat for others. Worldwide, invasive species are second only to habitat destruction as a cause of extinction and the consequent loss of biological diversity. While this is a global problem, local action can be effective.

Characteristics which distinguish invasive non-native plants include heavy seed production and effective seed dispersal mechanisms (such as birds), rapid growth and aggressive competition against other plants. Many of the plants listed here can thrive even in undisturbed areas, and can tolerate a wide range of soil, moisture and light conditions. Because they are "new" on the landscape, they lack the complex mix of predators, diseases and other species that keep them in balance in their home territories. The harmful impacts of these plants may escape notice for many years; often the "lag time" is considerable, sometimes more than 100 years.

A casual inventory of woodlands or abandoned fields near your home will probably reveal a surprising number of landscape escapees. They are a real threat to the region's biodiversity and the health of natural communities. All the plants listed here have been observed in the Upper Valley (particularly the Connecticut River corridor), quietly pushing their way into the region's natural areas.

What can you do?

- Learn to identify these plants. For help, contact someone from the groups listed on the back of this brochure.
- Monitor the natural areas in your neighborhood.
- Help prevent new infestations by not planting them, or by removing plants when you first notice them. (Be sure to obtain the landowner's permission!)
- Volunteer to help out with restoration projects.
- Make certain that the plants in your yard aren't a part of the problem. Use plants which are known to be well behaved. Try native plants in your yard.
- Beware of cultivars of the listed invasive plants; many produce seeds which revert to original form.
- Encourage local nurseries not to sell invasives, and ask them to suggest substitute plants.

Control

- Avoid soil disturbance to prevent invasive plants from establishing; seed or cover disturbed areas promptly.
- Some young invasive plants are easy to pull, as roots are shallow.
- Cut plants in early summer when new growth starts. Cut new sprouts frequently, to weaken the root system. This approach takes time and requires diligence.
- If you have access to a weed wrench, you can remove small trees or shrubs up to 1.5" diameter, with a minimum of soil disturbance.
- Some trees, such as Norway maple, succumb to aggressive bark girdling.
- Seeds will persist for some time and may germinate over a several-year period, so effective eradication efforts need monitoring.

Herbicide use

NOTE: Herbicide use is illegal in or near wetlands, unless the applicator is licensed and has a state permit.

- Foliage sprouting from cut plants makes a compact target for limited use of herbicide spray.
- Freshly cut stems of woody plants can be painted immediately (use a foam brush) with full strength Roundup to prevent resprouting. This method is effective if used late in growing season. Apply with extreme care.

Other invasive plants...

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) See separate brochure available in many towns.

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)

Goutweed or Bishop's Weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) Very common in gardens

Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

Winged Euonymus or Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*)

Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

Black Swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*)

Porcelain Berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)

Plants to watch closely

Common Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)

Amur Maple (*Acer ginnala*)

Common Privet (*Ligustrum spp*)

More information

This brochure is printed by the Upper Valley Purple Loosestrife Coalition:

Conservation Commissions of Canaan, Claremont, Cornish, Enfield, Hanover, Hartford, Haverhill, Lebanon, Lyme, Norwich, Orford, Piermont, Plainfield, Weathersfield, and West Windsor

Canaan Bird and Garden Club
Garden Clubs of Hanover, Quechee
Hanover Conservation Council
Lake Mascoma Community Association
League of Women Voters of the Upper Valley
Planning Board of Springfield VT
The Nature Conservancy of New Hampshire

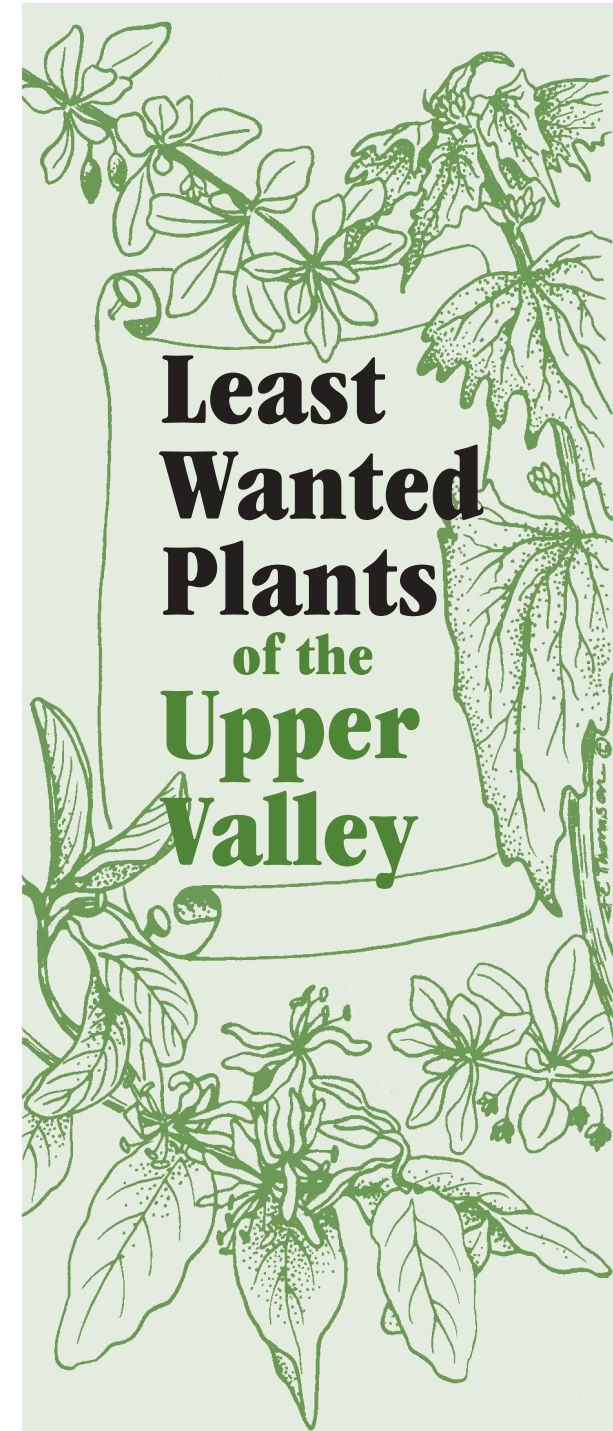
Website: www.valley.net/~invasiveplants has photos of many of the plants listed here, links to other websites, background information, and news about state and local actions directed at control of these problem plants.

Email: purple@valley.net

You can sign up for an e-mail invasive plant newsletter.

Mail: Loosestrife, Box 726, Hanover, NH 03755.

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FUNDING ASSISTANCE: EPA—NEW ENGLAND OFFICE, HANOVER GARDEN CLUB

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