

Beaver Island's Top Ten Invasive Species

Invasive Species: What is an invasive plant? Invasive plants are typically non-native, rapidly reproducing species, which threaten the integrity of natural areas. Once established in an area, invasive species can have devastating effects. Finding and treating invasive plants as soon as they appear saves time and money on future efforts.

What should you look for?

Phragmites is a very tall grass that occurs in both native and non-native forms. The two forms are difficult to tell apart, but in general the invasive form occurs along Lake Michigan and inland lake shorelines in very dense stands that shade out other plants. The seed heads are large and loose and resemble a feather-duster when mature. The leaves are dark green (not yellow-green), and the stems are solid green, dull colored, slightly ribbed, with no spotting on the stem and little or no red where the leaves attach to the stem. Native Phragmites plants have shiny, smooth stems with red where the leaves attach and spotting on the stem due to a native fungus that does not attack the invasive form.



Autumn olive is a shrub that is found in open habitats such as road edges and old fields. It has small oval or lance-shaped leaves that alternate in their attachment to the stem. The leaves are usually grayish-green in color, and their undersides are silvery-white. The flowers are small, light yellow, and very fragrant. They appear soon after the plant leafs out in the spring or early summer. In the fall, the plant will be covered with small, edible red fruits with white spots. Seeds are spread by birds.



Scots pine (Scotch pine) is one of only three pine species on Beaver Island. It has very short, twisted needles (no more than 2 inches long) that occur two in a bundle. The



native white pine has five needles per bundle, and the red pine, also native, has two needles per bundle, but the needles are 4 to 5 inches long.

Marsh thistle (European swamp thistle) is a thistle that grows 3 to 5 feet tall. It has a rosette (circle) of leaves at the base that are long, spiny, and deeply lobed. The stem is thick, often reddish, and covered with hairy spines and equally spiny, hairy leaves. The pinkish-purple flowers appear at the top of the stem in a tight cluster, usually in June or July. On Beaver Island this plant is more likely to be found in moist areas than in dry sand. The native Pitcher's (beach) thistle, which is a federally threatened species, is found growing on sandy Lake Michigan beaches. It is a less spiny, shorter plant, with distinctive gray-green foliage, and has a single flower head that is a light yellow-purple. If in doubt, consult an expert before eradicating any thistles from sandy Lake Michigan beaches.



Spotted knapweed is an herbaceous (non-woody) plant found mostly in dry, open areas. The first year after germination it lives as a rosette (circle) of irregularly lobed gray-green leaves, and during the second year it flowers profusely from long, branched stalks 8-40 inches tall. There are leaves along the flowering stems that alternate with each other in their attachment to the stem. The stem leaves are lance-shaped or slightly lobed. The small pink to purple flowers are thistle-like in appearance and occur on individual stalks. The plant is difficult to eliminate because it has a deep taproot that will regrow if the above-ground plant is removed. Spotted knapweed contains an irritant chemical, so gloves should be worn while pulling. Because of its thistle-like appearance and gray-green leaves, it can be mistaken for native plants when not



flowering, including wormwood and the federally endangered Pitcher's (beach) thistle. If in doubt, consult an expert before removing.

Purple loosestrife grows up to 5 feet tall and is most often found in damp habitats. It has a square stem like a mint, and the pairs of leaves that occur on the stems grow directly opposite each other. The leaves are lance-shaped, and the stem and leaves are covered with fine hairs. It flowers from June until September and produces showy spikes of bright pink-purple flowers, sometimes with over 30 stems from a single plant. Purple loosestrife has been found in scattered clumps around the island, including along the Lake Michigan shoreline. It is important to be vigilant and eliminate this invasive before it becomes more common.



Wild Parsnip is an herbaceous (not woody) plant that grows about 4 feet tall in full sun conditions. Its flowers are produced in an umbel, which is a multi-branched head composed of small flowers and shaped like a flat umbrella. The flowers are yellow and produced in July and August on Beaver Island. The leaves are compound, meaning that there is more than one leaflet on a stalk. Wild parsnip has from 5-15 leaflets on a stalk, and the leaflets on the end of the stalk are smaller than the ones at the base. Wild parsnip has a deeply grooved stem (like the grooves on a celery stalk) once the plant is mature, which distinguishes it from other parsnips, of which there are many. Warning: if the sap from cutting leaves and stems gets on the skin which is then exposed to sunlight, there is a risk of developing reddening and blisters. Gloves, long sleeves and long pants should be worn when eradicating this plant..



Garlic mustard is an herbaceous (not woody) plant that tolerates shade and is found most commonly in mature woods. Its leaves are rounded or triangular in shape with scalloped edges. The leaf veins are prominent and form a branching network pattern on the surface of the leaves. The plant grows 12-36 inches in height. The small flowers are white with four petals and occur in clusters at the top of the plant. On Beaver Island, it will be the only plant of its height flowering in the woods in May. At this time, garlic mustard is not a serious problem on the island, but it is important to eradicate any plants that are found to prevent the species from spreading.



Bush Honeysuckle has been introduced to North America from Eurasia. There are two species that are found on Beaver Island, and they are difficult to distinguish from the two native bush honeysuckle species. (There are also two native vine honeysuckle species on the island.) The two introduced species, Tartarian and Morrow honeysuckle, have pinkish-white or pink flowers, but the native bush honeysuckles have yellow flowers. In addition, the older stems of the introduced honeysuckles are hollow, but the older stems of native plants are solid. Bush honeysuckles, usually found in sunny areas, form dense stands of stems that can be 6 feet tall.



Narrow-leaf cattail grows in wetlands, just like our native common cattail species. In fact, it grows alongside the native cattails, even hybridizing with them. Luckily, the narrow-leaf cattail is easily distinguishable from the common cattail. The narrow-leaf cattail has about an inch-long gap between the male and female flowers on the flowering stalk that is the typical brown "cat tail" for which the



plant is named. The native common cattail does not have a gap between the flowers. Its brown "cat tail" is one long, smooth structure.

Invasive Plant Species Management Plan

Purpose: to identify and inventory endangered species and invasive plant species on Beaver Island and devise environmentally appropriate measures to protect the former and control the latter.

Problem Statement: Beaver Island's natural resources have been damaged as a result of weather, logging, recreation and nature. It is necessary to identify endangered and invasive plant species to protect the former and control the latter.

Goal: To monitor and assess management actions to protect endangered native plants and prevent, identify and eliminate specific invasive plant species to insure that Beaver Island property owners continue to obtain the economic benefits of eco-tourism and funding.

You can help: Locate, monitor, control invasives.

More information is available at:

www.beaverislandassociation.org

To participate, email your name, address, affiliation or organization and phone number and email to:

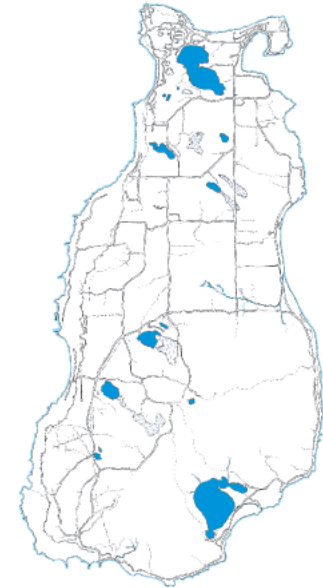
Beaverislandassociation@gmail.com



Beaver Island Association
Endangered and Invasive Species
Management Initiative

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The purpose of this brochure is to inform you of the dangers of invasive species, how to control them and their negative impact on outdoor activities, real estate values, the island economy and our environment. Invasive plants are spreading on almost all private and public lands on our islands.

- Invasive plants can decrease your ability to enjoy hunting, fishing, mushroom collecting, bird watching, and other recreational pursuits.
- Invasive plants, if left unchecked, will limit many uses of our islands now and for future generations.
- Invasive plants can harm the natural heritage of our wetlands, fields, forests, lakes, and rivers.
- The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be to control invasive plants.

You can be a part of the solution by learning about Beaver Island's invasive plants and taking action to prevent their spread.

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