

Issue 5: November 30, 2022

Please consider sharing this newsletter or the [signup page](#) with your networks. If you have any questions or comments about the newsletter or the council, drop me a line. —Kris Abell, Coordinator

More Than 1,100 Pennsylvanians in First Statewide Invasive Species Impacts Survey

More than 1,100 Pennsylvanians participated in the first ever statewide Invasive Species Impacts Survey, conducted by the Governor's Invasive Species Council. The survey closed on November 18.

Residents and leaders in local and state government, agriculture, conservation and natural resources, education, business, and nonprofit organizations provided their experiences with invasive plants, insects, animals, and pathogens on land and in waterways across the state.

This wealth of information will be instrumental in helping the council demonstrate the types and extent of impacts that invasive species are having on public and private resources, operations, and activities.

It will also help the council understand current sources of funding for management (or the lack thereof) and establish support for a permanent statewide regional framework to manage invasive species.

Thank you to everyone who documented their challenges with nonnative invasive species. The council will share survey findings in its February newsletter

Depts. of Conservation and Natural Resources and Health Partner to Help Prevent Lyme Disease through Japanese Barberry Management and Education



Japanese barberry

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and Department of Health are partnering to help prevent Lyme disease through public education and management of Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), which has been correlated to an increase in Lyme disease cases.

Federal funding provided through the Department of Health is enabling DCNR Bureau of Forestry and Bureau of State Parks staff to increase removal of barberry in state parks and forests.

It also supports education on tick safety for visitors to state parks and personal protective equipment for staff to mitigate tick bites.

Japanese barberry is an invasive species that can dominate deep in the woods and along woodland edges. Because barberry tends to leaf out earlier than native shrubs and deer don't prefer it, it outcompetes native species.

Barberry is a prime example of the adverse effects of invasive species on public health. It provides habitat for blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*), which transmit Lyme disease, and [research](#) shows that it increases the survival rates of the ticks.

Key factors are the increased temperature and humidity generated by the thick, arching branches of the barberry shrub, which help ticks survive, and the habitat the shrub provides to mice, rabbits, and birds that are hosts for the tick.

Specifically, the white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) is a reservoir host for Lyme disease that uses barberry as a habitat. The blacklegged tick can become infected after feeding off the mouse, which can lead to the spread of Lyme disease.

Another [study](#) shows that management of barberry reduces contact between blacklegged ticks and white-footed mice, resulting in the reduction of Lyme disease infected ticks.

There's a lot of work to be done to manage Japanese barberry on private and public lands across Pennsylvania. For more information on how to control this invasive, see DCNR's [invasive plant fact sheet on barberry \(PDF\)](#).

Barberry was added to the [Pennsylvania Noxious Weed List](#) in 2021, which means that after a two-year grace period, it may no longer be sold, distributed, cultivated, or propagated in Pennsylvania.

PennDOT Is Developing Contractor Equipment Decontamination Standards for Aquatic Invasives, Invites Input

PennDOT is working with the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to update its 2016 biological assessment of the effects of its bridge replacement and maintenance program on a number of native federally and state protected mussel species in the Ohio River Basin.

These species include northern riffleshell, clubshell, rayed bean, snuffbox, sheepnose, rabbitsfoot, and pearly mussels, as well as the round hickorynut and longsolid, which are pending federal listing and listing of critical habitat.

As part of the review and renew process, PennDOT is developing standardized best management practices (BMPs) for contractors to help reduce impacts to the mussel species and their habitat.

These will include BMPs to control aquatic invasive species that will be incorporated into all regional construction projects where equipment is anticipated to enter or contact a stream.

The goal is to have a standardized list of the most effective and easily implemented decontamination BMPs that will ensure construction equipment is free of harmful aquatic invasive species.

If your organization would like to share proven successful decontamination measures for aquatic invasives, please contact [Jesse Sabitsky](#), PennDOT Threatened and Endangered Species Coordinator, at (717) 787-5054.

Date Set for Pennsylvania Native Species Day 2023

The second annual Pennsylvania Native Species Day is set for Thursday, May 18, 2023. Mark your calendars and plan to join in with activities!

Celebrate Pennsylvania's diverse native plants, animals, and insects, and highlight the need to protect them against the proliferation of invasive species.

Our biodiverse native ecosystem provides countless benefits: fisheries and other food sources, timber, climate resilience, pollination, natural pest control, and outdoor recreation, including fishing, boating, and hiking, and related economies.

But many native species are being easily outcompeted by invasive species that have few or no natural predators here.

The Governor's Invasive Species Council launched the first Pennsylvania Native Species Day in 2022 to increase knowledge of our invaluable and irreplaceable native species, from the eastern hemlock to the brook trout and many others.

More than a dozen organizations statewide participated.

For updates, visit the [Pennsylvania Native Species Day web page](#).

Resources and Opportunities for Your Organization

Learn about Pennsylvania's Noxious Weed List at council booth at Farm Show, January 7-14

A number of widespread invasive species, including Callery pear, Japanese barberry, ravenna grass, and others, were recently added to the [Pennsylvania Noxious Weed List](#).

Talk with an expert about plants on the Noxious Weed List by visiting the Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council booth at Farm Show, January 7-14, in Harrisburg.

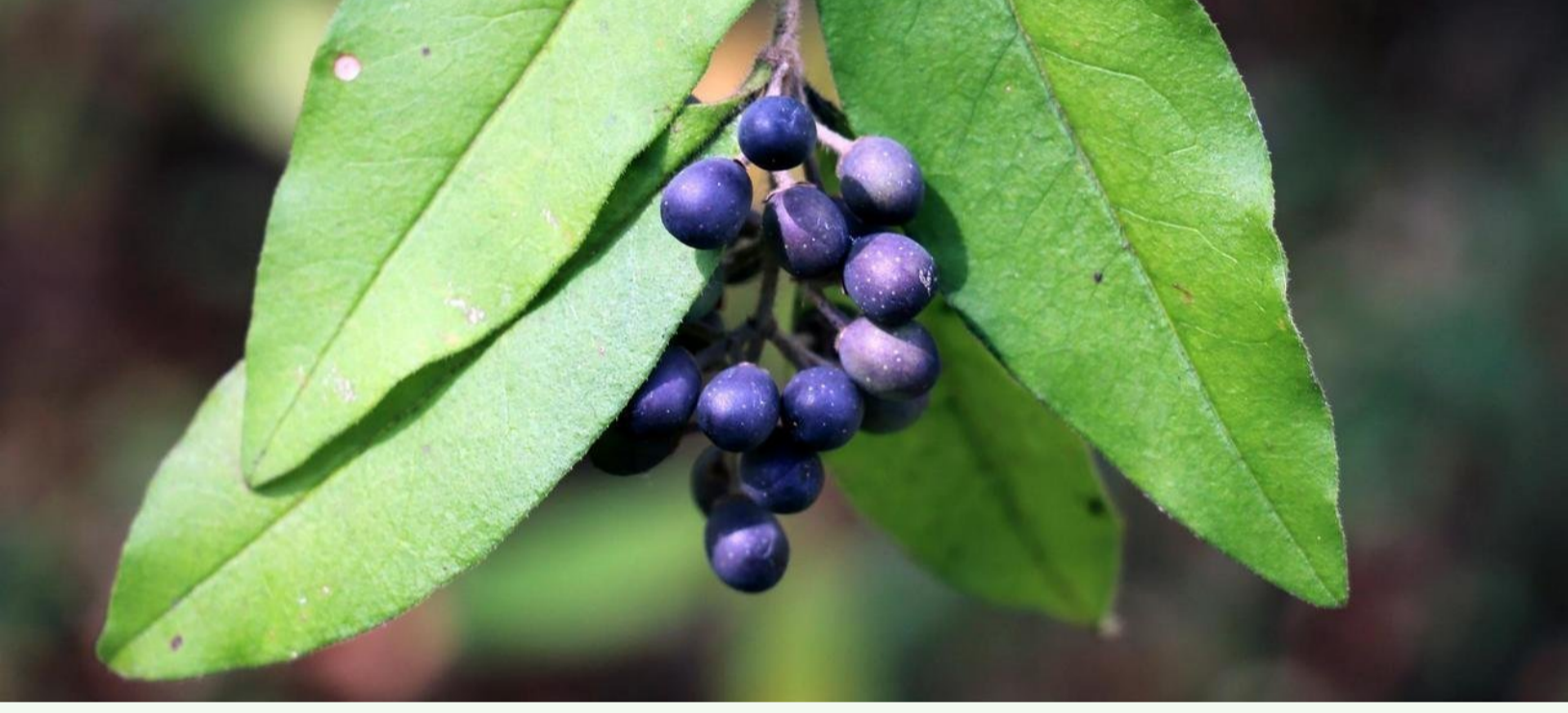
You can also learn which great native plant species options to choose instead of particular noxious plants and vote for your "Least Wanted" invasive plant.

Noxious weeds are plants that are determined to be injurious to public health, crops, livestock, agricultural land, or other property, including forest land and bodies of water.

Because they have detrimental impacts on our economy and environment, plants on the Noxious Weed List are illegal to sell, propagate, or distribute in Pennsylvania.

Almost 50 plants are on the list, many of which are commonly found in residential landscapes and sold at nurseries and greenhouses.

Learn how to identify and remove cork tree and privet in new videos from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources



Privet

Cork tree is an emerging invasive species in Pennsylvania, and it's important to help prevent its spread.

Birds and other wildlife spread the seeds, with the result that cork trees crowd out beneficial native plants in both urban and natural areas. Learn how to identify and remove cork tree in this video from DCNR: [Invasive Species Spotlight: Cork Tree](#).

Privets are shrubs that form dense thickets which reduce light and moisture availability for native shrubs and wildflowers.

This invasive plant is still used in landscaping and it proliferates rapidly due to the number of berries it produces that are spread by birds and other wildlife.

If you have privet on your property, consider removing and replacing it with a [native shrub](#). This [DCNR video](#) shows you how to identify and remove privet.

Live webinars on invasive snails and crayfish and harmful plants from iMapInvasives

The [Pennsylvania iMapInvasives program](#) is hosting a webinar speaker series featuring experts from across Pennsylvania who will talk about several invasive species.

The free hour-long webinars are suitable for a variety of audiences, including natural resource professionals, teachers and students, and the general public. Attend one session, or all!

Registration is required for each session. If you're interested in a particular webinar but can't make the scheduled time, please still register in order to receive a link to the recording.

- **Tuesday, Dec. 13, at 10:00 am: Invasive Snails**—Learn about the damage that invasive snails cause and how to identify these invaders from Drs. Lynne Beaty, Sam Nuttle, and Adam Simpson, Penn State Behrend. [Register here](#).
- **Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 10:00 am: Invasive Crayfish**—There are several invasive species of crayfish in Pennsylvania. Learn about them and their harmful impacts from Sean Hartzell, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. [Register here](#).
- **Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 10:00 am: Plants That Burn**—Find out which plants can be harmful to humans if touched from Emily Shosh, Potter County Conservation District. [Register here](#).

Apply now for a boating facility grant from the Fish and Boat Commission

As more communities realize the positive social and economic impacts of providing convenient boating access along their local waterways, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is excited to offer the next round of Boating Facility Grants to help communities capitalize on the surge in new boating activity.

The [Boating Facility Grant Program](#) provides grants for planning, acquisition, development, expansion, and rehabilitation of public boating facilities located on the waters of the Commonwealth.

Applicants can seek grants for site acquisition, development, expansion, prevention of the spread of aquatic invasive species, and rehabilitation of recreational boat access facilities.

Eligible construction projects may include boat ramps, courtesy floats, restrooms, access roads, parking areas and signs. Funds may also be used to make facilities ADA compliant.

The commission encourages townships, boroughs, and municipal and county governments to apply.

Nonprofit groups (501c3) including land trusts, conservancies, and watershed associations are also eligible.

Private businesses and service clubs are not eligible for direct funding but are encouraged to partner with their local county or municipality.

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