

Charlestown Township Nature News

Brought to you by:

The Charlestown Township Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

April, 2023



Move over shovels and boots
Make way for bulbs and roots

Spring is in the air, trees are in bloom
Time to get rid of the dark and the gloom

Before we blink the weather will warm
Our moods and activities will transform

To sunshine, lightness, and outdoor events
Gardens blooming with spring scents

Resuming our outdoor hikes in the park
Our environmental protection making its mark

Bees, bugs, and birds return in this season
Protect them we must beyond rhyme or reason

Our native species are under threat
We must all work to save them and never forget



HAPPY SPRING

MISSION

The Charlestown Environmental Advisory Committee's (EAC) mission is to advise the Board of Supervisors on environmental issues, the protection and preservation of natural resources, the use of open land and creating inventories of natural areas with unique features. All advice to be focused within the township and in the best interest and general welfare of its residents.

You are receiving this email because at some event or activity or through networking you signed up to be on the Charlestown EAC mailing list. Please feel free to share this with others who might be interested in future volunteer activities. To see the EAC's annual meeting schedule go to [Charlestown Township](#).

HAPPENINGS

- Our next meeting is on April 17th rather than our usual date, which would have been the 10th to avoid a conflict with the religious holiday/ 7:00 p.m. in our new township office, 11 Warren Blvd. Malvern.
- Charlestown Township is now officially a **BIRD TOWN!** Check out the *Bird Beat*, the quarterly Bird Town community eNewsletter. Community members can sign up to receive it. <https://constantcontactpages.com/su/Rh6gEGx>.
- Keep PA Beautiful state initiative - The EAC has adopted the clean-up of Charlestown Road. This is 2 times a year commitment. We will be hiring a "flagger force" (not indictive of actual company name) to drive behind us and ensure our safety. We can use all the help we can get so we hope you will join us! Plans are underway and details are forthcoming.
- PA Native Species Day – We are planning a fun event for the whole family. Details forthcoming. Save the date, May 18th. Details forthcoming on the Charlestown Township website.
 1. Art Contest for Children up to age 14 – Draw a Native Species You've Seen in Charlestown: Mammal, fish, bird, insect, flower, tree.
PRIZE: All children get a pack of native seeds, and winners will receive trees.
 2. Answer 5 Questions about Native Species for Adults, e.g., Name three native species for each category: trees, flowers, birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects. PRIZE: Dinner for two at local restaurant
 3. For All – Visit our table at Brightside Farm Park to see the meadow and grassland restoration project going on there to benefit Pennsylvania meadow birds. and increase grassland habitat for other wildlife.

SAMPLING OF PLANT SALES and IMPORTANT DATES

DATE	LOCATION	CONTACT
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April 29- May 1	Jenkins Arboretum	www.jenkinsarboretum.org/plantsale
May 6	Ladew Gardens Garden Festival	www.hsaphiladelphia.org/herb-sale-2022
May 6-7	Tyler Arboretum, 8 AM to 2 PM	https://tylerarboretum.org/
May 6-8	Brandywine Conservancy Wildflower, Native Plant and Seeds	https://www.brandywine.org/conservancy/events/wildflower-native-plant-seed-sale
May 11	Philadelphia Unit of the Herb Society of America, Yellow Springs	https://www.hsaphiladelphia.org/herb-sale-2022 Check website for 2023 information.
May 12-13	Landisville Garden and Landisville Herb and Garden Faire	https://www.landisvalleymuseum.org/event/save-the-dates-2023-herb-garden-faire-12-13-may/
May 13	Uwchlan Garden Club, 8 AM to 2 PM, Uwchlan Meeting House, Lionville, PA	
Submit by March 13, pick up on April 15	Conservancy Seedling Sale-	https://www.yorkccd.org/shop Orders

Upcoming Event Dates

Calling all Volunteers! April 15 Charlestown Clean-up. Sign up by contacting the township office (Rain date is April 16).

April 22 Earth Day

April 28 Arbor Day

May 18 PA Native Species Day

June 4-10 National Gardening Day

June 19-25 National Pollinator Week

THINGS TO KNOW

1. Learn about timely township news and notifications by signing up for the Charlestown Township weekly email. <http://www.charlestown.pa.us/updates.aspx>.

Our focus this issue is on Invasive Plants in our Region.

Note: much of the content in this edition comes from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Note 2: This post focuses on plant life. Many of the same concepts apply to all wildlife (fish, insects and aquatic animals). An example that is near and dear to all our hearts is the Spotted Lantern Fly. It originates from Asia and is killing our native trees.

Did you know that many of our gardening efforts may be at risk because of the invasion of foreigners, plant invaders that is! We call these invasives. Why are they a problem?

Before answering this question, let's define some terms.

Native Plants - those that have evolved and adapted to a specific location and have remained genetically unaltered by humans.

Note: there are multiple definitions for native plants. Only one is presented here for conciseness. Wasowski in "Provenance, defining our terms.(native plants)." The American Gardener 77.6 (Nov-Dec 1998): NA.). For other definitions see <https://www.wildflower.org/expert/show.php?id=972>.

Invasive Plants are those that (1):

- Are not native to our area
- Spread quickly, grow in many conditions, and squeeze out native plants.
- Cause economic or environmental harm or harm to health
- Are trees, shrubs, vines, grasses or flowers

Invasives have been brought into our area on purpose or by accident. Conventional nurseries import non-native plants for their beauty and sale ability without considering the cost to the environment. Other invasives hitch rides on plants entering the country. Some were transported as packing material. To homeowner and landscape managers, invasives can be very enticing as they are often beautiful and grow quickly. However, there is often a high price to pay if the invasive spreads outside the garden or takes needed nutrients from wildlife.


Weeds – plants whose undesirable qualities outweigh their good points.

Now, to answer the question posed above. Invasives reduce habitat for native wildlife. They compete with natives and often take control. Our wildlife cannot use these invasive plants for food or homes.

Invasive plants have some things in common that make them aggressive and difficult to control:

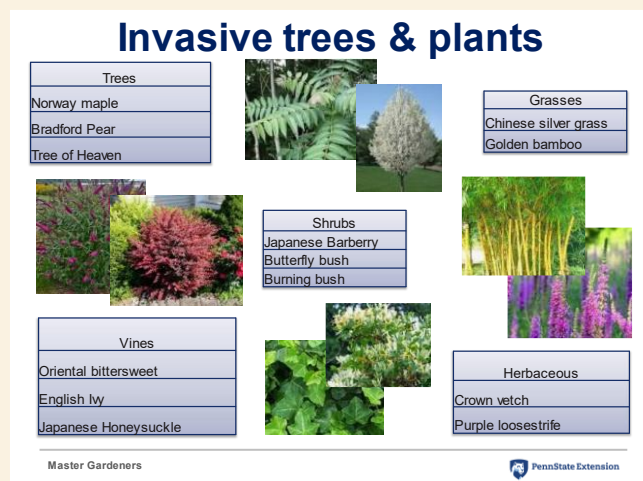
- Ability to grow in many conditions
- Rapid growth
- Ability to colonize disturbed ground
- Ability to thrive in high nutrient conditions (i.e. excess fertilizers)
- Ability to reproduce rapidly by roots and shoots. If spread by seed, disperse and sprout easily
- Having roots and rhizomes with large food reserves
- Ability to survive and reproduce under adverse conditions
- Having high photosynthetic rates -- “greening up” earlier in the spring which gives these plants a competitive advantage
- Lacking natural predators, pathogens, and parasites

Invasives are financially and environmentally costly. People spend hours of their time trying to minimize their spread and liberally use herbicides (for example, Roundup) to control these invasives.

Have faith however – there are things we can all do to help. 

1. Make sure whatever you plant in this new season is native. This can be deceiving as there may be multiple varieties of a species, some of which are native, and some are not. The easiest way to make sure you pick true natives is to buy them from a source you trust to sell native plants. Many of the plant sales noted in our area do just that. It is also easy to find the genus name for the native – even though a plant may have one common name such as marigold, there are varieties that are native and those that are not. The Latin name is unique for each variety.
2. Minimize ground disturbance on your property. Make sure any soil or fill material you use is free of weed seeds.
3. Minimize your use of fertilizer. Over-feeding is common and gives invasives an advantage. First try using compost and mulches.
4. Monitor your property frequently and act when you see a plant that doesn't belong in your garden. If you take quick action, you may have success with mechanical removal (good old fashioned muscle power) to remove them rather than needing a chemical solution. If you do need to use a chemical herbicide, make sure you talk to a professional who understands the need to minimize the use of these and will help you find the best solution. A critical step is to prevent the invasive from dropping and spreading its seed, so how and when you remove them is important.
5. Clean your boots and equipment when you are done working outside.

It is impossible to list all the invasive species in PA. The most problematic in our area are noted below. For more comprehensive lists see (2).



The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee has added several species to its list of banned for sale horticulture effective in 2023. These include:

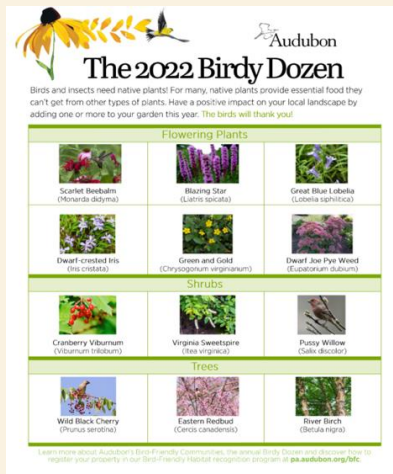
- ✿ Japanese barberry - Berberis
- ✿ Burning Bush - Euonymus
- ✿ Privet Ligustrum (Chinese, European, Japanese and Border)
- ✿ Callery Pear - Pyrus calleryana

The Committee meets again this month and will consider adding the following plants to the prohibited list. These include:

- ✿ Butterfly bush - Buddleja Davidii
- ✿ English ivy - Hedera Helix
- ✿ Japanese maple - Acer Palmatum
- ✿ Japanese spirea - Spirea Japonica
- ✿ Golden bamboo - Phyllostachys Aurea
- ✿ ? Chinese or Japanese Silver Grass - Miscanthus sinensis
- ✿ Heavenly bamboo - Nandina Domestica
- ✿ Miscanthus grass Miscanthus sinensis
- ✿ Norway maple Acer- Platanoides
- ✿ Oriental bittersweet - Celastrus Orbiculatus
- ✿ Russian and autumn olives - Elaeagnus
- ✿ Porcelain berry - Ampelopsis Gandulosa
- ✿ Paulownia Empress Tree, Princess Tree - Paulownia Tomentosa
- ✿ Yellow flag iris - Iris Pseudacorus

Spring Suggestion

The Audubon Society has published the “Birdy Dozen”, natives that our birds love, in addition to the “Dirty Dozen”, plants to avoid. Try planting one or more of the Birdy Dozen. See below and reference (3).



Some historians believe that “April” comes from the Latin verb *aperire*, meaning to open.

“You are only here for a short visit. Don’t hurry. Don’t worry. And be sure to smell the flowers along the way.”

Walter C. Hagen

References

- (1) <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/InvasivePlants/pages/default.aspx>
- (2) <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/InvasivePlants/InvasivePlantFactSheets/Pages/default.aspx>
- (3) Panativeplantsociety.org, paudabon.org/bfc



Happy planting. Enjoy what the earth has to offer in this beautiful season.