

Common Invasive Plants at Fresh Pond Reservation



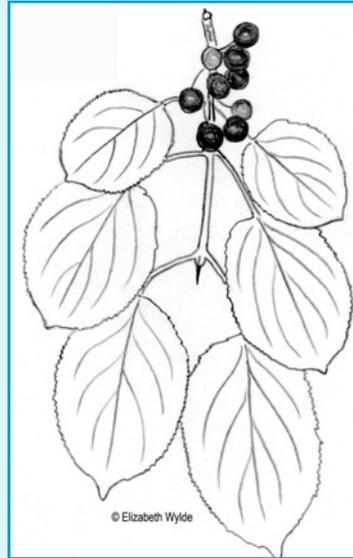
Known to kill monarch caterpillars this vine can be mistaken for milkweed by butterflies. It has tiny purple star-shaped flowers that are yellow in the middle that develop into 2" long green pods containing numerous seeds similar to those of milkweed. Each seed has a parachute that carries it long distances by wind or by floating across water. This vine quickly wraps itself around pretty much anything and loves to climb chain-link fences. Since pulling plants out usually leaves behind networks of spaghetti roots, digging and careful disposal seem to be the only effective long-term method of control.

Black Swallowwort

Because it has attractive leaves and large, showy, clusters of cream colored flowers, this edible perennial was widely planted as an ornamental. The flowers, however, produce numerous fertile seeds not consumed by insects. It can also spread by underground rhizomes creating dense thickets up to 10 feet tall. It grows well near water, in disturbed areas, and can tolerate full shade, drought, and high temperatures. Removal requires pulling up the entire root.

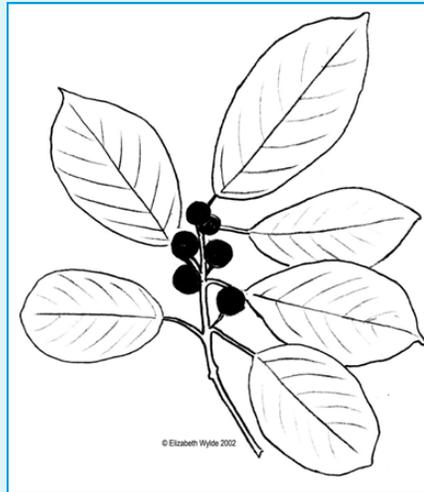


Japanese Knotweed



Common Buckthorn

Both types of buckthorn, which can reach 20 feet in height, were imported from Europe for use as small ornamental trees and hedges and soon escaped into fields, open woods, and wetlands. The juicy, black berries of these non-native shrubs harbor very few insects, which is especially detrimental to baby birds, who need protein for optimal growth. A thicket of buckthorn offers safe nesting sites, but a poor diet. In the Reservation we are using weed wrenches to pull up buckthorn by the roots and then replanting with native shrubs.

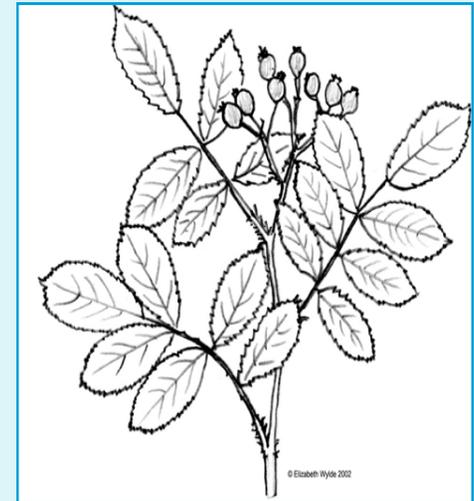


Glossy Buckthorn

Beneath lovely purple flower clusters lies a root system that forms impenetrable mats crowding out native plants, and reducing plant and animal diversity. A single plant produces 2 million seeds scattered by wind, water, and waterfowl. Although insects visit the flowers for nectar, no other animals benefit from its presence, and many are harmed by the loss of biodiversity resulting from its proliferation. Once established, purple loosestrife is difficult to remove except by using chemicals. At Fresh Pond we have been releasing beetles who feed on the leaves.

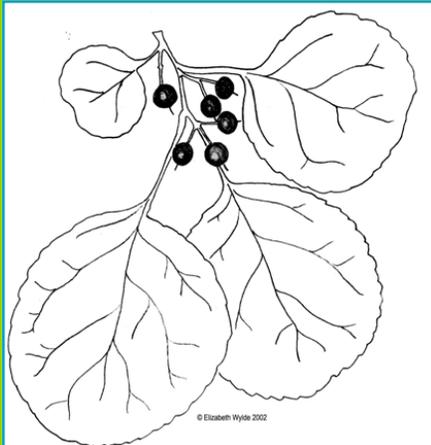


Purple Loosestrife



Multiflora Rose

Imported from Japan in the 1930's for erosion control, these spiny shrubs have also been planted along highways as crash barriers. Producing showy, fragrant, pink or white flowers in the summer and bright red rose hips in the fall, the hips and spiny canes provide food and shelter for animals. Spreading in disturbed areas, open fields, and many other habitats, it also creates impenetrable thickets that exclude native plant species. Control requires removal of entire bush.



Oriental Bittersweet

Spreading rapidly at Fresh Pond, this tenacious vine coils around trees and also climbs up the perimeter fence. While gaining access to sunlight, the vine strangles trees as they try to grow. Red berries become visible in the fall when their yellow fruit covers break open. Birds and other animals enjoy eating the berries, which they disperse widely. Vines can be cut at the base and unwound, but to eliminate bittersweet, roots need to be dug up and disposed of.



Poison Ivy

A vine growing on hairy stems, it has variable shiny "leaves of three" (let them be) that turn red in the fall. Common in open woodlands, it can also become a ground cover in open fields. A native, it prefers disturbed areas such as trails, parks, yards, and recreation areas. Since every part of the plant is poisonous, removal must be done carefully. At Fresh Pond we're testing out a natural herbicide of vinegar, salt, and organic dish detergent.

How to Help Out

- Remove invasive plants in your yard and neighborhood
- Tell your neighbors about invasive plants
- Join volunteers to help out removing invasive plants while monitoring plants and wildlife at Fresh Pond Reservation!

Mondays 5:30—7:30 pm
Thursdays 2:00—4:00 pm
1st Sundays 1: 00—4:00 pm

May - November

Contact Deb: fpr@cambridgema.gov
617 349 6489



Garlic Mustard

This edible plant chokes out native plants and releases chemicals that interfere with the formation of mycorrhizal associations and root growth. First-year plants remain as green rosettes over the winter and then in very early spring they grow quickly, blocking sunlight from plants that sprout later. Out of little white flowers with 4 petals, it grows long upright seed pods. Imported by European settlers who ate the spring leaves for vitamin C, garlic mustard is not known to be eaten by other animals. To remove, pull plants before they go to seed.

Common Invasive Plants at Fresh Pond Reservation

Often introduced, an invasive plant grows so prolifically that it can reduce the abundance of native plants. Some invasive plants release toxic chemicals into the soil, while others form pure stands, or have adapted especially well to urban environments or climate change. Native plants have been shown to be much more likely to serve as food for herbivorous insects. A diverse and abundant insect population provides an important source of protein for birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and mammals.



Norway Maple

Our most common urban street tree, it is pollution and disturbance adapted, tolerating compacted soils, a wide range of soil pH levels, extreme heat, and drought. Its leaves emerge very early in spring and stay green until late fall, allowing it to grow faster than native trees. Its shade tolerance allows it to seed itself in undisturbed woodlands, where it lacks insect predators, while also leaching toxins into the soil preventing native seeds from germinating. Pull seedlings as soon as possible.