

WORKSHOP ON NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES FOR THE NORTHERN NECK and MIDDLE PENINSULA LANDOWNERS

Have you ever wondered what those fast-growing, stinky, walnut-like trees are that are growing along public roadways, highways, or even in your own back yard? Or how about those dense stands of tall, feathery reeds that are overtaking areas where there used to be wintering ducks feeding among the cordgrasses, sedges, and duck potato? Or perhaps you've observed stately trees being overtaken by dense masses of shrubby vines with thorns of steel?

Chances are that tree you are seeing is Tree of Heaven, the dense stands of tall feathery reeds are Common Reed, or Phragmites, and the shrubby vine is Multiflora Rose. In some places these species are so competitive that they form dense stands where nothing else grows. Of course these aren't the only problem plants in our area; there are many others--some old familiars, some that have been lurking in hiding for a while and have recently exploded, and some newcomers. Some of the more familiar are Johnsongrass, Kudzu, Canada Thistle, Chinese privet, and Japanese Honeysuckle. Others that have been around for awhile but are becoming more problematic include Tree of Heaven, Phragmites, Multiflora Rose, Chinese Privet, Autumn Olive, and Japanese Stiltgrass. Japanese Knotweed and Mile-a-Minute are recent arrivals on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula.

So why should we be concerned about all these new plants taking up residence in Virginia? Because the spread of invasive plants can have tremendous effects on everything from pollination, to water quality, to wildlife habitat, and may threaten our local economy and our health. Since European settlement, over 50,000 species have been introduced. About 98% are crop plants, but 5,000 escaped species compete with about 17,000 native species. About 400 species are serious invaders. Invasive plants cause economic costs: from \$23- 120 billion annually according to two studies, and \$1 billion in Virginia alone, according to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

A workshop co-sponsored by the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Tidewater RC& D, USDA Extension Office, and Virginia Department of Recreation and Conservation will take place on Saturday, April 25 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Beale Memorial Church in Tappahannock. In this workshop we hope to raise awareness about the silent invasion taking place around us and enable citizens to manage invasive plant problems on their own properties. The morning will feature presentations from professionals on the threats that invasive plants pose to wildlife and humans, basic identification of a few common species in this area, some recommended treatment methods, safety pointers, and information

handouts. Luncheon is provided, and will be followed by a demonstration treatment nearby. There is a \$5 registration fee and registration is required.

To register, download a registration brochure at either the Tidewater RC& D website: www.tidewaterrcd.org, or the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge website: www.fws.gov/northeast/rappahannock. Or you may call the Tidewater RC&D at 804/443-1118. Please be sure to wear protective clothing (long pants, long sleeves, shoes) if you plan on attending the demonstration.



Tree of Heaven. Introduced in 1784 by a Philadelphia gardener, it has since become a national pest.