

FREE WORKSHOP ON NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES FOR THE NORTHERN NECK COMMUNITY

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?

You're Invited!
To a FREE Workshop on the Management of Invasive Plants

Are you interested in learning more about those pesky trees, vines, or reeds that seem to be overtaking local roadways, parks, marshes, or perhaps even your back yard? Want to learn how to identify them, why they are a threat to humans and wildlife, and best of all—how to get rid of them?

Then come to the Northern Neck's first community workshop on the management of invasive plant species!

WHEN: July 21, 2007 from 10am-2pm
WHERE: King Conservation & Visitor Center at Menokin, 4 mi N of Warsaw
WHO: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service * Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends * Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation * Virginia Native Plant Society (Northern Neck Chapter) * Menokin Foundation * National Audubon Society

Contact Beth Reavis at 804-333-1776 or menokin@menokin.org to reserve your space today!



Chances are that tree you are seeing is Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), the dense stands of tall feathery reeds are Common Reed, or Phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), and the shrubby vine is Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*). In some places these species are so competitive that they form dense monocultures where nothing else grows. Of course these aren't the only problem species 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, and Japanese Honeysuckle. Others that have been around for awhile but lately have become pervasive are Tree of Heaven, Phragmites (Common reed), Multiflora Rose, Chinese Privet, Autumn Olive, and Japanese Stiltgrass. Japanese Knotweed may be a recent arrival on the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, and if Mile-a-Minute isn't here yet, it's coming soon!

So why should we be concerned about all these new plants taking up residence in Virginia? Because proliferation of invasive plants can have tremendous effects on everything from pollination, to water quality, to wildlife habitat, threatening our local economy and our health. Where Tree of Heaven or Japanese Stiltgrass dominate, germination of desired trees is prevented and costly measures are needed to control them. The loss of native plant species can also lead to the loss of native pollinators upon which our crops depend. China for example, no longer has native bees and many crops are pollinated by hand. And finally, many species of wildlife depend on the diversity of plants and habitat 'niches' found in healthy ecosystems. Invasive species can completely eliminate this diversity, and not surprisingly the wildlife disappears with it.

A free workshop co-sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Menokin Foundation, Northern Neck Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the National

Audubon Society will take place on Saturday, July 21 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Menokin historic ruins visitors center. 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 (provided), will be followed by a demonstration treatment on the premises.

To register, please call the Menokin Foundation at 804/333-1776, or if you have questions about the agenda, please call Sandy Spencer at the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge at 804/333-1470. Please be sure to wear protective clothing (long pants, long sleeves, boots).

Hope to see you there!



***Tree of Heaven.** Introduced in 1784 by a Philadelphia gardener, it has since become a national pest. It may occur as seedlings that pop up by the hundreds in fields, or as thickets in roadsides or neglected areas. It also invades areas disturbed by development and logging. It has several strategies for gaining a competitive advantage: it emits a chemical that inhibits germination of other plants' seeds (like the native black walnut also does); the female can produce 100's of thousands of seeds in a single season; and it can send rhizomes underground from which clones can sprout. Its foul odor may play a role in warding off herbivorous insects further assuring its survival. The sap contains a cardiotoxin, which, should it enter your bloodstream through a cut or scrape, can make you very ill, according to one medical journal reporting on just such an incident concerning an arborist. Simply cutting it is not effective as it will resprout.*