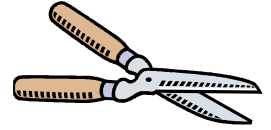




INVASIVE SPECIES



The Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District is a subdivision of state government and is funded primarily by the City of Indianapolis / Marion County government. The District works to assist county residents and others with a host of natural resource issues and concerns. These Conservation Fact Sheets are provided to assist people to better care for the land.



What are Invasive Species?

Invasive plants are ones that spread prolifically, often dominating a landscape by out-competing all other plants. They are usually exotic, meaning that they are not originally from the area.

Why Should You Be Concerned?

Invasive plants take over the area in which they grow. They often out-compete other plant species for water, nutrients, and/or light. Reducing the diversity of plants in an area is detrimental to the health of the ecosystem. Wildlife may be deprived of food or shelter, invasive species may feed exotic pests or spread disease, and invasive plants may not provide the same soil and water benefits that native species do. A landscape is more productive and provides more benefits when it contains a healthy balance of native species.



Photo of kudzu courtesy of: USDA



Photo of bush honeysuckle courtesy of: USDA



Japanese honeysuckle



Photo of crown vetch courtesy of: USDA

How to Combat Invasives:

Invasives can be difficult to control due to their quick spreading behavior. Early detection is key, so learn what common invasive species are and watch for them in your yard. If you do find them, you can manually pull them, mechanically cut or remove them, or chemically treat them. Sometimes a combination of these methods is most effective. The best method and time to remove a plant varies with each species, so carefully research the plant before taking action. Be sure to continue watching the area, as more plants are likely to sprout. On average, it takes 3-4 years for complete eradication. For more information on species identification and removal see the Midwest Invasive Plant Network at: www.mipn.org/.

Common Invasives in Marion County:

- Bush honeysuckle
- Japanese honeysuckle
- Multiflora rose
- Autumn olive
- Crown vetch
- Garlic mustard
- Purple Loosestrife
- Reed canary grass
- Common reed or phragmites
- Oriental bittersweet
- Buckthorns
- Tree of Heaven
- Cut-leaved teasel
- Canada thistle
- Smooth brome grass
- Periwinkle
- Winged burning bush
- Siberian elm
- Sericea lespedeza
- Sweet clover

(This is not a complete list.)