

TOP 10 UPLAND INVASIVE PLANTS, MILFORD N.H.

[Oriental Bittersweet Vine - *Celastrus orbiculatus*](#)



Photos by Donald Cameron 2021

Description: Deciduous, woody, perennial vine. Bittersweet vines have alternate, glossy, round, or oval leaves that are 2-5" long. The roots are a distinctive orange color, while the vines are light to medium brown with a white pith. Bittersweet has small, greenish-yellow, five petal flowers, which produce green fruit in early summer that ripens to yellow and orange by the fall.

Habitat: Oriental Bittersweet can be found in grasslands, woodlands, marsh edges, and along roadsides. While it is often found in open sunny sites, its tolerance for shade allows it to invade forested areas as well.

Comments: It is an extremely aggressive vine that climbs on other vegetation, restricting its host plant's access to sunlight, nutrients, and water. The added weight of bittersweet vines makes trees and other plants more vulnerable to storm damage.

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[Purple Loosestrife - *Lythrum salicaria*](#)



Photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Purple Loosestrife can be identified by its oppositely arranged, downy, smooth edged leaves along the stem; as well as by its showy, purple flowers that bloom from mid-July through early August.

Habitat: Purple Loosestrife is usually found in sunny, wet areas, such as the edges of ponds and lakes, drainage ditches, marshes, and wetlands.

Comments: It is considered a serious threat to these habitats. Once Purple Loosestrife becomes established, it spreads quickly displacing the native species.

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[Japanese Barberry - Berberis thunbergii](#)



Photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Japanese Barberry is a deciduous, multi branched shrub. It generally grows to be 2 to 5 feet tall and has stems that are thickly covered with small opposite leaves and thorns. In the Winter and early Spring, you can identify Japanese barberry by its arching spiny branches and red glossy fruits. Its roots and shoots have distinctive yellow inner bark.

Habitat: It is frequently found growing in dense masses in forest understories, open fields, or roadsides.

Comments: Japanese barberry is a prolific seed producer. Japanese barberry is of concern because of its tendency outcompete native plants. In addition, it is also associated with an increase of Lyme disease in areas where it has formed dense thickets. Its dense growth habit creates a humid environment that increases tick survival and population.

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[Burning Bush - Euonymus alatus](#)



photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Burning bush is a deciduous shrub. Burning bush can reach 20 feet in both height and width, identified with simple, light green leaves oppositely arranged. To identify burning bush without its leaves, it is a multi-stemmed shrub with dense branching. The bark of older stems is gray or brownish gray with small fissures/furrows. Its bark may appear ridged. Younger stems are green having lateral tan corky wing appendages.

Habitat: Burning bush prefers dry upland soils with full sun to heavy shade. It grows in man-made or disturbed habitats, forest edges, meadow, fields, shrub lands or thickets.

Comments: Birds eat the red fruits and hasten its dispersal around the landscape.

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[Multiflora Rose - Rosa multiflora](#)



Photos by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Multiflora Rose is a thorny perennial shrub with arching stems or canes. It grows to be six to ten feet tall and can reach up to fifteen feet. Its compound leaves consist of two inch long leaflets that are oval and toothed. Clusters of showy, white to pink, fragrant flowers bloom between May and June. The small, bright red fruits, referred to as rose hips, develop in the summer and remain on the bush through the winter.

Habitat: Multiflora rose is highly aggressive and readily colonizes old fields, pastures, roadsides, open woodlands, and forest edge habitats. It can also establish itself in forested sites where open gaps occur. It is most productive in sunny areas with well-drained soils

Comments: Native to Japan, Korea, and eastern China, multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) was introduced into the United States in 1866 as rootstock for ornamental roses. Birds, especially the Northern Mockingbird, feed on the fruits and disperse it's seeds widely.

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[Autumn Olive - *Elaeagnus umbrellata*](#)



Photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Autumn olive is a shrub that can often reach up to 20 feet tall. The upper leaf surfaces are dark green while the undersides are covered with grayish or silver scales which give the leaves a silvery cast. Small, light yellow flowers occur in clusters of 5 to 10 and bloom in mid to late spring. Small fleshy fruits range in color from pink to red. Autumn olive is easily seen in the spring since it leafs out when most native vegetation is still dormant.

Habitat: The shrub can be found in man-made or disturbed habitats, forest edges, meadows and fields.

Comments: An individual plant can produce up to eight pounds of fruit each season, which is readily consumed and dispersed by birds.

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Tree of Heaven - *Ailanthus altissima*



Photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Tree of Heaven is an aggressive invasive tree species. It is incredibly fast growing and if given the chance can reach up to 60' in height. The leaf blade is compound (made up of two or more discrete leaflets) with one leaf per node along the stem. The edges of the leaf blades have teeth. The leaves either drop off in winter or will wither but persist on the plant.

Habitat: The Tree of Heaven prefers forest edges, forests, shrublands or thickets.

Comments: An individual plant can produce up to eight pounds of fruit each season, which is readily consumed and dispersed by birds. It produces thousands of wind-dispersed seeds that will germinate under many conditions. It is also closely associated with spotted lanternfly – an emerging insect pest in the United States.

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[Garlic Mustard - *Alliaria petiolata*](#)



Photos by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Garlic Mustard is an invasive biennial plant. It develops a rosette of leaves the first growing season, maturing into a tall 4" (1.22 m) high erect plant the second year. The leaves have a sharp, garlic-like flavor. The flowers are white. The leaves are simple lobed or un-lobed, but not separated into leaflets. The leaf arrangement is alternate and the edge of the leaf blade has either lobes, or both teeth and lobes.

Habitat: Garlic Mustard is most aggressive in roadsides and shady, moist, rich forests, and may form dense areas.

Comments: Plants spread quickly into natural areas leading to competition and displacement of native species.

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[Common Buckthorn - Rhamnus cathartica](#)



Photo by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

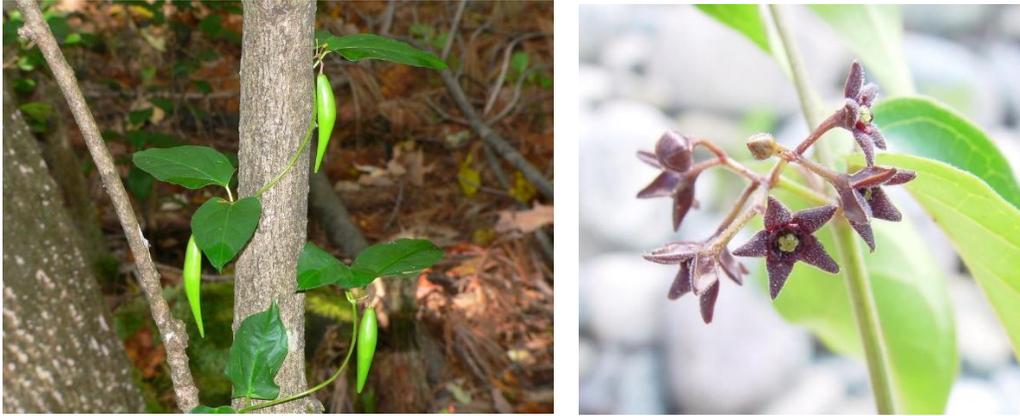
Description: Common Buckthorn is a deciduous shrub or small tree measuring 20' by 15'. Its Bark is grayish to brown with raised lenticels. The Stems are cinnamon colored with terminal spine. Leaf arrangement is alternate, simple and broadly ovate with toothed margins. Flowers are inconspicuous, 4-petaled, greenish-yellow, and appear around mid-June. Common Buckthorns Fruit is fleshy, about 1/4" in diameter and turns black in the fall.

Habitat: Adapts to most conditions including pH, heavy shade to full sun.

Comments: Highly aggressive, fast growing, outcompetes native species. Seeds are bird dispersed.

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[Black Swallowwort - *Cynanchum louiseae*](#)



Photos by gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org

Description: Black Swallowwort is a perennial vine that can grow up to 6' tall. Flower petal color is blue to purple. There are five petals, sepals, or tepals in the flowers. The leaves are simple (lobed or unlobed, but not separated into leaflets). Leaf arrangement is opposite, there are two leaves per node along the stem. The edge of the leaf blade is entire (has no teeth or lobes). The fruit is dry and splits open when ripe.

Habitat: Prefers man-made or disturbed habitats, forest edges, forests, meadows and fields, shores of rivers or lakes.

Comments: It can be quite invasive, forming dense stands and crowding out other vegetation.

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RESOURCES

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension

www.ceinfo.unh.edu

Native Plant Trust

www.nativeplanttrust.org

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

[Planning Successful Invasive Plant Management Projects | New Hampshire Fish and Game Department \(state.nh.us\)](#)

Natural Heritage Bureau N.H. Division of Forests and Lands

[Natural Heritage Bureau | NH Division of Forests and Lands](#)