

Colchester is certified as a **Community Wildlife Habitat** through the National Wildlife Federation since 2010; the first community in CT with this certification



5 Components of a Wildlife Habitat:

- Food
- Water
- Cover
- Places to Raise Young
- Sustainable Gardening Practices (includes removal of invasive plants)



May is Gardening for Wildlife Month – Consider certifying your property as a Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation and earn points for Colchester's active certification as a Community Wildlife Habitat

There will be a special offering in May.
For details go to: <https://www.nwf.org/CERTIFY>

BE AWARE and TAKE ACTION:

Invasives are emerging in home landscapes; learn more and remove

Garlic Mustard

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an herb from Europe that was likely introduced for use in cooking. A biennial plant, it doesn't bloom until its second year, at which point it rises to 1 to 3 feet tall and produces small white flowers.

Its numerous seeds are dispersed by wind and water. It invades fields and woodlands, displacing native vegetation. Garlic mustard can change soil conditions to inhibit the growth of most other plants.

For small populations, hand pulling can be effective. You can also mow before the plants produce seeds, but if the stems are cut too high, they may flower again. Also effective are systemic herbicides based on the active ingredient glyphosate, applied as a foliar spray. Because garlic mustard seeds persist in the soil, annual control may be needed for several years. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicides.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/garlic-mustard>



Multiflora Rose

Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) is a deciduous shrub with white flowers and red fruit. Brought here from Asia, it was planted as wildlife food and as a living fence, due to its dense growth and sharp thorns. It can grow to 10 feet high or more and is typically wider than it is tall.

It forms dense thickets in fields and field edges, crowding out other species. It also grows in open wetlands and in forests where canopy openings occur.

(Multiflora Rose – continued)

Small plants and seedlings may be pulled up by the roots when soil is moist (wear gloves!); larger plants can be cut, but re-sprouting will occur.* Persistent cutting or mowing multiple times during the growing season over several years may kill the plant, but diligence is required. Mowing can prevent seedlings from establishing. Goats will browse it but repeated, heavy damage over multiple years is required to kill established shrubs.

Herbicides† are effective as foliar applications (glyphosate or triclopyr solution), cut-stump application (glyphosate or triclopyr solution applied immediately after cutting except in early spring), or basal bark application (glyphosate or triclopyr ester in bark oil).

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/rosa_multiflora.htm



Autumn Olive

Autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) is a deciduous shrub with white flowers in spring and bright red berries in fall, originally came from Asia and was widely planted in the U.S. for wildlife food and erosion control. It can grow up to 15 feet high.

It invades field and field edges and spreads easily. Plus, autumn olive's ability to fix nitrogen helps it out-compete and displace native species.

Seedlings and small saplings may be hand pulled, cut, or mowed. Larger plants may be controlled with a systemic herbicide. For small numbers of mature plants, cutting followed by painting of freshly cut stumps with a systemic herbicide is effective. For large numbers of mature plants, treatment with a foliar spray of a systemic herbicide may be more practical. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicide.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/autumn-olive>



Bush Honeysuckle

Bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera spp.*) are shrubs that can grow up to 12 feet tall. They include Amur Honeysuckle, Morrow's Honeysuckle, Tatarian Honeysuckle, and Bell's Honeysuckle. Native to Asia and Europe, these honeysuckles were introduced as ornamental landscape plants. Their leaf shape and flower color are variable

These plants invade fields, field edges, and forests. They produce leaves earlier in the spring than most native species, which gives them a competitive advantage.

Control seedlings and small saplings by hand pulling or repeated cutting or mowing. Application of a systemic herbicide to the freshly cut stump of larger plants is generally effective. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicides.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/bush-honeysuckle>



Japanese Knotweed

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was brought from eastern Asia as a garden plant. This perennial herb grows up to 10 feet tall, with heart-shaped leaves and white flowers.

It invades a wide variety of habitats and forms dense stands that crowd out other plants.

Established populations have extensive root systems, so removal by pulling or repeated cutting is only effective for young plants. Treatment with systemic herbicide can be effective, but you might need to treat repeatedly; another possibility is stem injection or application of a systemic herbicide to freshly cut stems, though this is labor intensive.

For larger populations, cut the plants in late June or early July, and then treat the re-growth with a foliar spray of a systemic herbicide in late August or early September. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicide. In wetlands, only apply herbicides registered for use in those areas.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/japanese-knotweed>



Winged Euonymus (also called Burning Bush)

Winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*) gets its name from the woody "wings" on many twigs. It's a deciduous shrub that can grow up to 10 feet tall. It's also known as burning bush because of its red fall foliage.

It invades fields, field edges, and forests, and displaces native plants. Birds eat the fruit and disperse the seeds of winged euonymus. Second generation plants produced from these seed typically lack the bright red fall foliage of the parent plants.

For small populations of seedlings and small plants, try hand pulling. In fields, frequent mowing can be effective. Large plants can be controlled by cutting, followed by the immediate application of a systemic herbicide to the cut stems or the application of a systemic herbicide as a foliar spray to stump sprouts in the following year. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicide.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/winged-euonymus>



Star of Bethlehem

Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) is native to most of southern and central Europe, north-western Africa and south-western Asia. It is an herbaceous perennial plant that prefers full sun to semi-shade in fertile loam soil and moist to mesic conditions.

Plants consist of linear rosette basal leaves approximately 6-12" (15-30 cm) in length and 1" (30 cm) across. Leaves curve upward at the base and bend downward starting in the middle. Each leaf has a white stripe in the middle with smooth margins and parallel venation. Flower stalks end in an umbel like stalk of white flowers. Each flower is approximately 0.75" across when open and consists of 6 white tepals, each with a broad green midstripe beneath. Flowers bloom in late spring for about 2 weeks with flowers opening in the morning and closing at noon. Each flower is replaced by a 3-celled seed capsule that contains black seeds.

Ecological Threat *O. umbellatum* is an aggressive plant that was introduced into the United States as an ornamental plant. It can displace native species and invade high-quality natural habitats. [Note: often found along roads and seed dispersal into lawns]

<http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/weeds/plants/starbeth.htm>



Japanese Barberry

A deciduous shrub from Japan, Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) can grow up to 6 feet tall. It has red berries, small teardrop-shaped leaves, and thorny twigs, and was introduced for landscaping, often planted as a barrier hedge.

Birds and small mammals disperse its fruit; it invades fields, field edges, and forests, displacing native plants.

Small plants can be hand pulled, but be sure to use thick gloves because of the sharp thorns, [or dig out]. Systemic herbicides are effective when applied as a foliar spray or to freshly cut stumps. Always read and follow the directions on the label when using herbicide. In wetlands, only apply herbicides registered for use in those areas.

<https://www.massaudubon.org/nature-wildlife/invasive-plants-in-massachusetts/japanese-barberry>

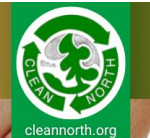


For more information on Invasive Plants in Connecticut:

https://cipwg.uconn.edu/invasive_plant_list/

Read on about.....

Japanese barberry and Lyme disease



More on the concerns about Invasive Japanese Barberry and Ticks

CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION SCIENTISTS REPORT ON A DECADE'S WORTH OF DATA LINKING INCREASED ABUNDANCES OF BLACKLEGGED TICKS WITH THE INVASIVE SHRUB, JAPANESE BARBERRY.

New Haven, CT – In the most recent issue of the journal *Environmental Entomology*, The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's (CAES) Dr. Scott Williams, Ms. Megan Linske, and Dr. Jeffrey Ward linked increased abundances of blacklegged (aka "deer") ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) with the invasive shrub Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). Japanese barberry was brought to the eastern United States in the late 1800s as a replacement for common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*) in landscape plantings. Unfortunately, it escaped from cultivation and now grows wild throughout Connecticut's woodlands. Its dense thickets prevent native trees and wildflowers from regenerating and also create a humid environment under which ticks thrive. The CAES research team discovered there are significantly higher abundances of ticks infected with the causal agent of Lyme disease, *Borrelia burgdorferi*, in Japanese barberry-infested forests than in forests without barberry. The team also found that managing barberry can significantly reduce tick abundances for up to 5 years.

The implications of this research are that this invasive plant is altering native Connecticut ecosystems and perpetuating populations of blacklegged ticks which harbor disease agents that can have negative consequences on the health of the Connecticut public. Information on Japanese barberry management can be found at:

http://www.ct.gov/caes/lib/caes/documents/publications/special_bulletins/special_bulletin_feb_2013_ward.pdf

If you find a tick feeding on you or a family member, it can be submitted to the CAES Tick Testing Laboratory where it will be tested, free of charge, for the pathogens that cause Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis. See: <http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2837&q=378220>.

The best way to avoid tick-borne disease is prevention. Do a tick check every night. While bathing won't wash feeding ticks away, it does provide the opportunity to search for ticks. After coming inside from tick-infested forests, tumbling clothing in the dryer on high heat for 10 minutes will dry out and kill any ticks that may be attached. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend using permethrin or at least 20% DEET for repelling ticks. For more information see:

https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/prev/on_people.html.

Source: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Press_Releases/2017/CAESBarberryPressRelease92717pdf.pdf

Garden for Wildlife – Native Plant Suggestions

Garden centers are stocking for Spring and then summer planting. Consider adding native trees and shrubs to your home landscape as natural food sources for birds and pollinators, as well as places for birds to shelter in cover and to raise their young.

Several Suggestions:

Trees:

- Sourwood <https://www.thespruce.com/sourwood-sorrel-growing-guide-5210869>
- Flowering Dogwood <https://www.thespruce.com/twelve-species-dogwood-trees-shrubs-subshrubs-3269662>
- Holly (focus on native varieties) <https://www.thespruce.com/eighteen-species-holly-trees-and-shrubs-3269647>
- White Oak or other native varieties <https://www.thespruce.com/types-of-oak-trees-7099100>

Shrubs:

- Arrowwood (Viburnum) <https://www.thespruce.com/arrowwood-viburnum-shrubs-growing-tips-2132732>
- Beautyberry <https://www.thespruce.com/beautyberry-shrubs-purple-berries-2132437>
- Elderberry <https://www.thespruce.com/what-is-elderberry-herb-1762285>
- Grey Dogwood <https://www.thespruce.com/gray-dogwood-plant-profile-4843543>
- Highbush Blueberry <https://www.ctaudubon.org/2023/10/homegrown-habitat-october-2023-highbush-blueberry/>
- Inkberry <https://www.thespruce.com/densa-inkberry-holly-versatile-native-option-2131850>
- Leucothoe <https://www.thespruce.com/coast-leucothoe-plant-profile-4845927> [Note: Native cultivars have been bred for smaller sizes to fit smaller landscapes or spaces.]
- Lowbush Blueberry <https://plantdatabase.uconn.edu/detail.php?pid=518>
- Red Chokeberry <https://www.thespruce.com/black-chokeberry-growing-profile-3269200>
- Red Osier Dogwood <https://www.thespruce.com/red-twist-dogwood-shrubs-2132727> [Note: Native cultivars have been bred for different colors, and smaller sizes to fit smaller landscapes or spaces.]
- Shadbush/Serviceberry <https://www.thespruce.com/nine-species-serviceberry-trees-and-shrubs-3269674>
- Spicebush <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-grow-spicebush-5069607>
- Winterberry <https://www.thespruce.com/winterberry-holly-shrubs-2131220>

For more native plant suggestions and other landscaping information, refer to Enhancing Your Backyard Habitat for Wildlife by Peter Picone, Wildlife Biologist, CT DEEP (free PDF) https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/EnhancingBackyardHabitatpdf.pdf

Visit Cohen Woodlands and Colchester's StoryWalk

Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands is a 206 acre open space park with so much to offer to view and get close to nature and wildlife – two ponds, large fields, three hiking trails, picnic tables and demonstration gardens developed and maintained by members of the Colchester Garden Club for pollinators with plants supporting pollinators through the seasons For a map of the park and brochure about the pollinator garden: <https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/pages/ruby-and-elizabeth-cohen-woodlands> .

This Spring, visit the StoryWalk at Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands, 96 McDonald Road. The Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester is one of the partner organizations of the Colchester StoryWalk.

To learn more, see brochure: <https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/files/storywalk-brochure>



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For Parents:

Encourage your children to spend time outdoors in nature every day; the National Wildlife Federation's Green Hour has an abundance of activity suggestions. <https://thegreenhour.org/>

For ideas to garden with children go to KidsGardening at <https://kidsgardening.org/>

