

Conservation in Illinois, the United States and across the globe is seriously threatened.

Some of the culprits remain nearly invisible until their presence is expressed in the disease or death of their host. Others mark their presence in our waters, wildlands and agricultural lands, quickly spreading where they lack natural controls.

Invasive species—plants and animals not present in Illinois prior to European settlement that can be aggressive in new environments because their natural enemies or other environmental controls were left behind in their native lands—are spreading, and new threats enter our state every year. Today we battle diseases such as butternut canker, Dutch elm disease and viral hemorrhagic septicemia, a deadly fish virus. Northeast Illinois is under quarantine to prevent the further spread of the emerald ash borer. Garlic mustard, buckthorn and bush honeysuckle have become the predominant species on the landscape. Asian carp appear in the news almost daily.

Whether you are a landowner, gardener, land manager, legislator, hiker, hunter, angler or a private citizen, invasive plants and animals impact the natural resources you rely on. Unfortunately, many don't know that millions of dollars are spent annually to control these species, or that invasive plants and animals are competing with and destroying native plant and animal pop-



ulations by disrupting complex food webs and habitat systems. Invasive species threaten the economic viability of agriculture, commercial fishing, forestry and recreation.

Many organizations, including the Department of Natural Resources, have organized events throughout the month of May, encouraging businesses, conservation groups, recreational groups, community organizations and citizens to take action against the introduction and spread of invasive species.

Taking place throughout the state this month are educational hikes and presentations to help residents and visitors understand how invasive species impact our lives. Teams will take to the field to pull garlic mustard and remove European buckthorn, and to scout for

invasive aquatic plants. For event information, visit www.illinoisinvasives.org.

Do your part this month and learn what you can do help fight these threats. Take part in a scheduled activity in your area, or take it upon yourself to set up a work day in your community.

But more importantly, make a personal pledge to change behaviors which may have contributed to the introduction or spread of an invasive species—don't move firewood, clean your boat between trips, don't empty your bait bucket (responsible anglers dispose of unwanted bait in the trash and never release bait into the water) and shop for native species at your garden center.

Yours in conservation,
Marc Miller, Director



May Events

European buckthorn removal

- 1 Grainger Woods and Independence Grove forest preserves, Lake County Forest Preserve District
- 8 Cuba Marsh and Prairie Wolf Slough forest preserves, Lake County FPD
- 9 Marl Flats Forest Preserve, Lake County FPD
- 16 Buffalo Creek and Wright Woods forest preserves, Lake County FPD

Garlic mustard pull

- 8 Oak Openings Nature Preserve, Liberty Prairie Conservancy
- 18 Grant Woods, Almond Marsh, Lake Bluff and Wright Woods forest preserves, Lake County FPD
- 22 Ryerson Woods, Almond Marsh, Middlefork Savanna, Rollins Savanna, Wadsworth Savanna and Wright Woods forest preserves, Lake County FPD
- Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- 23 Heron Creek Forest Preserves, Lake County FPD

Other activities

- 8 Invasive plant presentation at the Nature Institute, Godfrey
- Chicago River Invasive Plant Management Workday, North Park, Riverwoods
- 15 Invasive plant identification hike—Barkhausen-Cache River Wetlands Center
- Weed Watch Bio Blitz—War Bluff Sanctuary, Illinois Audubon
- Midlothian Clean-Up at Sundrop Prairie Midlothian, Illinois Native Plant Society
- 16 Oak Woodlands Wellness Checkup, Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake
- 18 Invasive plant identification and spread prevention, Eddyville
- 22 Conservation Field Day, Jackson County
- 29 Invasive Plant Management Training Session, Trail of Tears State Forest

To learn more about invasive species, visit dnr.state.il.us/orc/exotics/index.htm.