

## Invasive Plants

by Deb McNelly

What are invasive plants? They are non-native plants which cause harm to native plants, animals, humans, forests, farmland, or habitats. They spread easily and take over light, water, space and nutrients which native plants need. New Hampshire has 27 plants on the prohibited plant list. Some of the classic examples of invasive plants are bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, Japanese honeysuckle, and garlic mustard.

Let me tell you about one invasive plant. When I moved to Raymond, I discovered a plant which grew about two feet tall that produced clumps of small white flowers during April and May. I'd never seen the plant before. I either mowed it or pulled it out of the ground. I still have this plant in my yard. I have finally learned what it is.....garlic mustard.

Garlic mustard can rob other plants of light, nutrients, and water. Their roots and decaying leaves release a chemical into the soil that hinders the growth of other plants, This chemical also harms fungi in the soil needed by hardwoods. The plant is toxic to butterfly eggs laid on its leaves or stems. Therefore, these plants harm other plants, butterflies and trees. Who knew?

The following is a web address where you can learn about invasive plants. You'll first be directed to pages with photographs of 23 of the prohibited invasive plants. If you click on the name of the plant under its photo, you'll go to information about the plant which includes lots of photos, good descriptions of the plant and the harm it causes, and how to control it. The 2nd page of information about the plant also has a link called Control of Invasive Species by Numbers which provides even more information about controlling the plant.

[agriculture.nh.gov/divisions/plant-industry/trees-shrubs-vines.htm](http://agriculture.nh.gov/divisions/plant-industry/trees-shrubs-vines.htm)