Invasive Plants

Japanese Barberry (Berberis thunbergii)

This highly valued ornamental plant is reputedly displacing the forest understory, forming dense, impenetrable stands. Once established, it will spread and displace a wide variety of native plants. Still soil foraging as deer don't eat its prickly stems.

Small plants may be pulled by hand (use gloves). Large bushes should be clipped to base, then roots removed with pieces when small. Herbicides (glyphosate) and triclopyr are also effective.

Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica)

Knotweed forms dense stands that quickly outcompete native plants. Not used for food by any North American animal and with no natural insect predators, it is difficult to control once established. Will reproduce from seeds, stolons or roots so should not be composted. Small infestations can be hand pulled, being sure to get all the root. Herbicides (glyphosate) are not useful on mature plants, but may be used on young regrowth after cutting large plants.

Japanese silvergrass (Miscanthus sinensis)

This low growing grass seems to appear wherever soil is disturbed. It now lines most roadways and has displaced native grasses. An annual, it reproduces vigorously from seed. Of particular concern when it invades pastures since cows and horses won't eat it. Can be identified by the white line down the center of each blade. Small infestations can be hand pulled before seeds form in early fall; larger areas can be closely mowed and seeded with native grasses (see below). Ideally, before plant goes to seed in September. Herbicides (glyphosate) are effective. Seeds can be killed in soil for several years.

Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)

Once recommended for wildlife cover; multiflora rose has taken over pastures and old farm fields. Its June bloom is attractive, but produces thousands of seeds to spread the plant further; crowning out natives. Control is difficult when plants are mature as the thorny branches break off. However, once out close, the base can be easily dug out or killed with herbicides.

Purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria, Lythrum virgatum)

Escaped from gardens and now an invasive noxious weed. As it establishes and expands, especially in natural and disturbed wetlands, it outcompetes native grasses, trees, and other flowing plants that provide a higher quality source of nutrition for wildlife. Small infestations of purple loosestrife can be removed by hand. The entire root system must be removed from the ground. All plant material should be bagged and removed from the area to eliminate re-sprouting. Larger populations are harder to control using mechanical means. Mowing should not be used because it can increase the spread of the population by dispersing seeds and exposing the seed bank.

Burbling bush (Eucyclamens alatus)

Namned for its bright red foliage in the fall, this invasive bush is still sold in nurseries and is a common landscaping plant at shopping malls. However, it has spread from those confined areas into neighboring wetlands where it outcompetes native shrubs. It produces millions of seeds that help spread the plant. Mature plants need to be cut to the ground and the root dug out. Small plants can be hand pulled.

Garlic mustard (Alliaria petiolata)

A biennial, garlic mustard grows in a low rossette the first year and produces tall stems with white flowers the second year. It quickly spreads by seed and will take over acres. Can be easily pulled. Take care to pull before the seeds are formed, but be sure to get the entire tuber.

Invasive honeysuckle (Lonicera spp.)

Several species of invasive honeysuckle are found in the Broodhead watershed. Extermination is fairly difficult to distinguish without a naturalist's help. The invasive species are now more common that the native honeysuckle and include the American bittersweet honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica) which forms long vines. Established vines should be cut to the base, and roots removed. Remove a beet in the spring when plants are easier to identify.

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Common reed (Phragmites australis)

A tall wetland grass that grows up to 15 feet in height, common reed spreads through underground rhizomes. It is not prevalent in the Broodhead watershed, but in other areas it has completely displaced its native counterparts (Phragmites spp.). In order to prevent this happening in our watershed, the few areas where it grows should be kept aggressively. It is important to remove all parts of the plant; both above and underground.

Further reading

An excellent resource identifying these and other invasive species can be found at http://www.dnr.state.pa.us/fish/InvasiveweedInfoList.htm. Articles discuss management and control in detail and offer an array of native substitutes for invasive species.

Caring for your streamside property

Let the grasses grow - tall grasses by the stream help filter out soil, fertilizers and pesticides that run off your lawn and garden.

The wider the better - wider planting strips along the stream catch more pollutants and provide habitat for birds and beneficial insects.

Remove invasive plants - see the list on the reverse of this pamphlet, if you have any of the listed plants, eliminate them.

Plant native plants - use the chart inside to select native ferns, flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees to enhance your streamside property and create shade to cool the water. Trust like cold water!

For more information:

Monroe County Conservation District

The Pennslyvania Project

www.pennslyvony.com/ecosystems/

This brochure prepared by:

www.broodheadwatershed.org

Funded by:

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation

Grant #: BRC-RCI-13.3-506

There’s more to a stream than the stream itself