

INVASIVE OF THE MONTH

Red alert! Mile-a-minute weed spotted in our watershed

From Brodhead Watershed Association



Don't let this happen to a hillside near you! If you see mile-a-minute vine, report it to the landowner. This vine destroys habitats and leaves behind desolated land.



Mile-a-minute vine can literally cover a hillside in a season. It can slowly suffocate every tree, shrub, and blade of grass in its path. It can — and does — even engulf buildings.

According to Penn State Extension, “each vine can grow 20 to 30 feet long, forming a dense, tangled blanket of intertwined vines.” At its peak, it can grow six inches a day.

This killer has been spotted where Paradise Creek and the Brodhead meet, at the junction of Routes 191 and 447. The weed is an annual plant, growing from tiny seeds brought into an area in contaminated soil. Once established, it re-grows from seed every year and is also dispersed by birds and mammals that eat its fruit.

Small infestations are easy to pull. But be careful! You need long sleeves and heavy gloves for protection from its skin-ripping barbs. Before June, when the seeds mature, you can just pull the weed and leave it to dry. In July you must bag and burn it, otherwise the fruit will continue to ripen.

The plant has two kinds of leaves — perfect triangles along the vines and round, cuplike leaves around the clusters of green and blue berries.

IF YOU SEE THIS PLANT

On your own property, pull it up and bag it for the trash. Since mile-a-minute is an annual plant, you don't need to worry about roots left behind, but make very sure to get all berries.

On public land, such as game lands, township-protected properties, or land owned by Pocono Heritage Land Trust, contact the owner. Give them as much information as you can about the location. If you live in a private community, warn the managers or maintenance people.

GET THE FACTS

Penn State Extension has excellent, detailed information on stopping this invader at <https://extension.psu.edu/mile-a-minute>. More on invasive plants can be found at brodheadwatershed.org/invasive-species-management-plan/

