

Addendum: Additional Details and Answers to Chat Questions
Elaine Mills, presenter – recorded November 13, 2020

A number of participants in the live Zoom session posed questions or made statements about specific invasive plants:

- I did not have an opportunity to respond to the following question from the chat box: With **bamboo** being invasive, how do you balance that with bamboo starting to be used for more "sustainable" products? I would create this balance by discouraging the use of any non-native bamboo species in home gardens where it is almost impossible to control and supporting companies that produce sustainable products in specially controlled environments. An interesting online article raises the question "[Is Bamboo Sustainable?](#)"
- Questions were raised about which types of **Liriope** are considered invasive and whether they can be kept under control. Both *Liriope spicata* and *L. muscari* have been designated as invasive in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, Virginia. The first spreads rapidly by underground rhizomes to cover a wide area. The second expands more slowly by short stolons (above-ground stems) within home gardens. It's the seeds in the berry-like fruits of both species that can be carried by birds and mammals beyond cultivation to invade natural areas.
- A participant inquired about methods for controlling invasive Japanese Knotweed. See my [article](#) on this plant with links to websites on its control. This [reply](#) to a similar question on the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower website offers some suggestions on native species for replacing Knotweed.
- A participant raised a question about whether an unknown fern expanding in her yard would be a considered invasive. **Hay-scented Fern** (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) is a native fern that can spread aggressively by rhizomes in favorable conditions to form clonal colonies. Some homeowners appreciate its ability to cover ground. This type of spread is of greatest concern in natural areas because of the plant's ability to dominate a forest understory, suppressing the development of tree seedlings. See an [article](#) from the New York Forest Owners Association in which they discuss these tendencies and this [link](#) to scholarly articles on its control. Another participant mentioned finding Hay-Scented Fern very effective at suppressing invasive Japanese Stiltgrass.
- Another participant mentioned that another native fern, **Ostrich Fern** (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) can be aggressive but very attractive.
- A question was raised about what type of **Wisteria** grows at the White House. The vines climbing on the South Portico of the White House are one of the invasive Asian species. See the [White House Archives](#) for photos.
- Invasive **Tree of Heaven** is apparently a host plant for the Spotted Lantern Fly in Pennsylvania.

- One participant has been told that a honeysuckle growing in her yard is invasive. **Amur Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera maackii*) is a non-native honeysuckle introduced into North America from eastern Asia in 1896. See this [Weed of the Week fact sheet](#) from the USDA Forest Service for more information.
- I mentioned that non-native **White Mulberry** is an invasive tree species. Our Extension Agent Kirsten Conrad commented that it can interbreed with the native Red Mulberry. A class participant recommended a [Perdue University Extension document](#) for distinguishing between the two species.
- In response to a question regarding progressive **state legislation** to keep invasive plants out of the nursery trade, Amy Crumpton, the chair of our Public Committee, stated that Virginia has limited noxious weed regulation and provided this [link](#) to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- A number of participants wondered how to approach **control of invasive plants** when they have many such species in their yards. For those living in Northern Virginia, I recommend completing a [consultation request form](#) for the local Audubon at Home program. An AAH ambassador can come to your home for a site visit, and together you can identify the plants in your yard and develop a plan to removing them and replacing them with more suitable native species that support wildlife.
- If you end up girdling and **cutting back an invasive tree**, Amy Crumpton, a Master Naturalist, says the remaining snag height of trunk that is left should be at least 15 feet.

Questions were also posed regarding specific native plants:

- One participant asked whether **American Wintergreen** (*Gaultheria procumbens*) might be used as an alternative for invasive Vinca. This native evergreen ground cover is very attractive, but I did not suggest this plant because several local Master Gardeners have not had much success in growing it. The Missouri Botanical Garden advises that this plant performs best in climates with cool summers. NC State Extension states that the plant is in the Blueberry Family; this means it is an ericaceous plant that requires acidic soil.
- A question was raised about using **Golden Ragwort** (*Packera aurea*) for **erosion control**. This native ground cover is highly recommended by the local Audubon at Home program as a replacement for English Ivy to control erosion on slopes.
- A question was raised about telling the **difference between native Oregon Grape** (*Mahonia aquifolium*) and **Leatherleaf Mahonia** (*Mahonia bealei*). During the Q&A session, I had mentioned that *M. aquifolium* is native to the West Coast.
 - I have since confirmed that the native range of **Oregon Grape** includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and California. This is a mound-shaped, evergreen shrub, about 3 to 6 feet tall. It has bright yellow, bell-shaped flowers in March; blue, grape-like fruit; and glossy, leathery leaves in groups of 5 to 9 leaflets that turn reddish in the fall.
 - The non-native **Leatherleaf Mahonia** grows 10 to 12 feet tall. Its compound leaves are considered to be coarser with 9-13 leaflets, and they do not display burgundy fall foliage.



The plant blooms earlier (January to February), and the long spires of flowers start upright and then hang down, while the flowers of *Mahonia aquifolium* are held in tight clusters.

- One participant raised a question about the **difference between the Downy Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier arborea*), which I described, and **Canadian Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier canadensis*).
 - **Downy Serviceberry** grows in Eastern Canada and eastern and central United States in sun to part shade in Zones 4 to 9. It grows 15 to 25 feet, blooms from March to April, and develops red-purple fruit. The common name “Downy” refers to the fine hairs found on the young leaves and twigs in the spring.
 - **Canadian Serviceberry** or Shadbush grows in eastern Canada and the East Coast of U. S. as far south as Georgia in Zones 4 to 8. It reaches 20 feet tall, has showy blooms from April to May, and black-colored fruit.

- **Cedar-rust disease** can pose problems even when alternate hosts cannot be seen in the neighborhood. Our Help Desk has provided the following helpful information on the disease and its impact on **Serviceberry**. Unfortunately, most sources recommend a distance of 1 to 2 miles between *Juniperus virginiana*, a member of the Cedar Family, and an alternate host such as *Amelanchier*, a member of the Apple Family.
 - These references provide information about the fungal disease and suggestions for management. Understanding how the fungus develops may offer you some very local control in your yard but not beyond. In most cases in the landscape, damage to either host is not severe enough to warrant fungicide applications.
 - [Rust Diseases](#) (University of Maryland Extension)
 - [Cedar Apple & Related Rusts on Ornamentals](#) (Penn State Extension)
 - [Cedar Apple Rust](#) (Cornell)
 - Here is a simple summary for recognizing and managing the disease.
 - Separate alternate hosts. Do not plant susceptible apples near susceptible junipers: a distance of 1 to 2 miles greatly reduces infection. (This is obviously not practical in areas where Eastern Red cedar is common.)
 - Hand pick and destroy cedar galls by April 1, before the spore-producing tendrils are formed. Cedar galls are most conspicuous and easy to see in wet weather when the orange spore tendrils are extruded. After the orange tendrils are produced, it is too late to prevent spore dispersal.
 - Symptoms of Rust on Shadbush or serviceberry (*Amelanchier*):
 - brownish-orange spots on leaves
 - distorted fruits with horn-like protrusions
 - If it is deemed necessary to use fungicides to control the disease, pages 3-8 to 3-12 of VA [Tech's Pest Management Guide](#) lists appropriate products as well as the timing of their use for members of the Apple Family.

- Emerald Ash Borer has apparently been found on **Fringetree** in Ohio and Kentucky this past summer.

- There were several inquiries on **identifying male and female plants** for native dioecious species.

Invasive Plants & Native Alternatives

- Nurseries generally label their **Winterberry** (*Ilex verticillata*) plants by cultivar, and clients can buy matched pairs of male and female plants (e.g., 'Red Sprite' (female) and 'Jim Dandy' (male), or 'Winter Gold' (female) and 'Southern Gentleman' (male).)
 - Unfortunately, **Inkberries** (*Ilex glabra*) are sold primarily for their foliage rather than their fruit, and some nurseries may not know which plants are male. There are some named cultivars, but if their sex is not always clearly described in the literature. [Fact Sheet FPS-272](#) from the University of Florida Extension states that male flowers are borne on a stalk consisting of 3 or more, while female flowers are generally found singly on the stem. This could help if customers are purchasing plants when they are in flower. Female plants can obviously be distinguished at the time they are in fruit.
 - Nurseries that specialize in native plants may pay more attention to the sex of dioecious plants, although they may receive plants from a source that doesn't distinguish between male and female plants.
- There was one final question that I did get a chance to address: With climate change, should we consider more southerly plants? Our Arlington County naturalist estimates that Virginians have around 1,300 native plants to choose from. Choosing species that are native locally or slightly further south and siting them appropriately for sun or moisture conditions is the best practice. (See the [Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora](#) and the [USDA Plants Database](#) to determine native ranges.)

