



## Honeysuckle

Honeysuckle is an upright deciduous shrub that can grow from several feet to up to 16 feet tall. The branches are wide spreading and can form dense thickets that block out sunlight preventing anything from growing underneath. Honeysuckle has paired red, orange or yellow berries, paired tubular flowers that are quite fragrant, and hollow branches. Honeysuckles are one of the first plants to leaf out in the spring and last to lose their dark green leaves in the fall. Honeysuckle spreads by both seed and vegetative means.

### TIPS

#### You Can Help By:

- Pulling the root system out.
- Cutting the larger plants.

## Bittersweet

Bittersweet (also known as Oriental or Asiatic Bittersweet) is a woody twining vine that can grow 40-50 feet, well into tree canopies. The vines normally grow 1-4 inches in diameter encircling and strangling trees as it grows. Oriental Bittersweet looks very similar to the native North American species and the two can be difficult to tell apart. A few key differences to look for: Oriental Bittersweet has yellow seed capsules while American Bittersweet has orange. Oriental Bittersweet has red berries strung out along the stem while American Bittersweet's berries are in large clusters near the end of the stems. The vines of both species will strangle nearby trees.

Bittersweet spreads by seeds which are dispersed by birds as well as people who carelessly dispose of unwanted bittersweet wreaths and other floral decorations. Bittersweet can also expand locally by stolons (a creeping runner), rhizomes and through root suckering (sends shoots up from the roots).



### TIPS

#### You Can Help By:

- Pulling the root system out and removing the vine from mature trees.
- Cutting the larger bittersweet vines.
- Carefully discarding unwanted decorations that contain bittersweet.

For more information about invasive species in Cumberland, visit the Lands & Conservation Commission page on the Town of Cumberland website: <http://cumberlandmaine.com/government/boards-committees/landsaamp-conservation-commission/>

## Cumberland Lands and Conservation Commission Invasive Species Guide

# WANTED



## For Crimes Against Our Town

### Attention Cumberland Residents:

We need your help! Invasive species are taking over our yards, our roadsides, and even our forests! Described in this pamphlet are a few of the more aggressive plants invading our Town. We have included photographs and descriptions to help you recognize these invaders. With your help we hope to make inroads in preventing these plants from spreading further.

-The Cumberland Lands and Conservation Commission



# The most common invasive plants in Cumberland, Maine

## Glossy & Common Buckthorn



Buckthorn is arguably the most aggressive invasive species prevalent throughout our Town and especially in the Town Forest. This species is extremely persistent and able to flourish in a multitude of conditions from shady damp areas to upland dry and sunny sites. Buckthorn hinders the regrowth of other woodland plants affecting the overall health of the forest and the many animals that live or feed there. Management of buckthorn is one of the toughest challenges within the urban forests. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for these dense buckthorn infestations, and can be a long-term and often costly endeavor. There are several attributes of buckthorn that make it especially difficult to control:

- *Buckthorn fruit is readily spread by birds*
- *Tree reaches fruit bearing age quickly*
- *Seeds may persist in the soil for up to 6 years before germinating*
- *Leaves out early in spring and stays green in the fall longer than other trees and shrubs, outcompeting native plants for light, space and nutrients*
- *Has chemicals in its roots, leaves, and fruit that inhibit the growth of other plants (allelopathic)*
- *Vigorous trees are difficult to kill even with herbicides*
- *Cut stumps will sprout with new vigorous shoots*

### TIPS

#### You Can Help By:

- Removing the root system when possible.
- Pulling smaller plants from the ground.
- Cutting large plants (over 10 feet tall) and then either chemically treat or continue to cut the many sprouts.
- Controlling the young growth by either destroying new plants or the new sprouting plants.

#### Note:

- Buckthorn spreads rapidly and once established it can take over large sections of your property.

## Japanese Knotweed or “American Bamboo”

Japanese Knotweed is a perennial that forms dense thickets up to 10 feet in height. Populations may be so dense that virtually all other plant species are shaded out and large colonies commonly exist as monocultures, significantly altering the natural habitat (University of Maine, 2001). Reproduction from rhizomes (underground stems) and even small fragments enables the plant to be easily transferred to new sites by flowing water or brought on site in fill material. This invasive plant is very common in Cumberland, found along roads, guard rails, and other disturbed areas. Once established, it is difficult to remove. Common traits include:

- *Bamboo-like stems*
- *Spreads by vegetative means*
- *Dense monocultures*
- *Shade tolerant*
- *Can survive repeated cuttings*



### TIPS

#### You Can Help By:

- Cutting or mowing stalks 3-6 times to stop sprouting.
- Hiring a licensed professional to treat plants.
- Pulling Japanese Knotweed out is not recommended. The stout rhizomes often break apart and can easily resprout.

## Phragmites or “Common Reed”



Phragmites, also known as common reed, is a tall perennial grass, |growing from 5-15 feet. Phragmites often grows in dense stands effectively out competing other vegetation. The Town Forest population is extensive and exists as a complete monoculture in the wetlands adjacent to the capped landfill. The population is expanding west of the snowmobile trail with a satellite population now located on the eastern boundary near the old railway bed and snowmobile trail.

Phragmites spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) and stems that are knocked over can take root and produce new shoots. Rootstalks, often exceeding 20 feet in length, interlock and form a dense network. The underground network of rhizomes has an expansion rate of 3 feet per year, but in optimal conditions can spread up to 30 feet in one season (University of Maine, 2001). Traits include:

- *Thrives along fresh and brackish waters where there has been disturbance*
- *Displaces short grass nesters and inland and wading waterfowl*
- *Creates a monoculture*
- *Dead stems are a fire hazard*

### TIPS

#### You Can Help By:

- Maintaining normal inflow/outflow to wet areas.
- Controlling new spreading in downstream areas.
- Not attempting to control without a professional, as wetland areas are sensitive.