



Purple loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

This invasive plant is originally from Europe and was brought to America and planted as an ornamental. Due to its prolific seed production (up to 2 million seeds per year) it can quickly invade a site, displacing native vegetation. It is especially invasive in wetlands where it creates dense monocultures and displaces native cattails that are an important wildlife habitat for many birds.

Reed canary grass

Phalaris arundinacea

This perennial grass is a native species but exhibits many invasive and undesirable characteristics. It was originally planted and cultivated by farmers across the U.S. due to its rapid growth and ability to tolerate wet soils. It has an extensive root system that allows it to rapidly colonize areas such as ditches, stream-banks, wet meadows, and floodplains where it forms dense stands. Because the stems tend to lie flat late in the summer, it provides poor to no habitat for nesting waterfowl and small mammals.

Common teasel

Dipsacus sylvestris

This invasive plant was introduced from Europe by early settlers as an ornamental and to aid in the combing of wool. It is a common invader of roadsides, meadows, and waste areas, especially on sites with damp, rich soils. Because of its densely prickly stems and flower heads, this plant can be very burdensome in recreation areas. Teasel produces mass numbers of seed from each flower head that can remain viable in the soil for many years making control of this plant difficult.

Japanese knotweed

Polygonum cuspidatum

This invasive plant is originally from Asia and was introduced to North America as an ornamental plant. It is commonly found along roadsides, on stream banks, in ditches and in abandoned fields. It spreads rapidly and extensively primarily through its vigorous root system that can extend as far as 60 feet horizontally. Japanese knotweed plants create stands of dense shade, crowding out native plants.

Common reed

Phragmites australis

This common perennial grass is native to North America but exhibits many invasive characteristics. It thrives on open wetland sites and is commonly found in roadside ditches and on stream-banks. Common reed spreads rapidly through prolific seeds and its underground root system. In addition, root fragments can be transported by water over long distances, and become established on new sites. It is especially of concern in wetland areas where it displaces desirable vegetation such as cattails, which provide an important habitat for wildlife.

Spotted knapweed

***Centaurea biebersteinii* (*Centaurea maculosa*)**

This invasive plant is originally from Europe and was introduced to North America as an ornamental. It is a rapid colonizer of disturbed areas such as roadsides and ditches where it displaces native vegetation. Chemicals that are present in its foliage and roots are effective at hindering the growth of surrounding vegetation. In addition, knapweed's deep tap root is very efficient at drawing up water and nutrients from the soil, making them unavailable to other plants.

Bull thistle

Cirsium vulgare

Many of the thistles that are abundant and familiar to us are non-native species that have become invasive in many areas. Originally from Eurasia, this plant reproduces primarily by seed and is commonly found in disturbed areas such as old fields, roadsides, and waste areas. The abundant seeds (up to 100,000 per plant) are viable in the soil for up to 10 years, which makes effective control of thistle difficult. Other invasive thistles in Pennsylvania are Canada thistle and nodding thistle.

Autumn olive

Elaeagnus umbellata

This invasive shrub is originally from Asia and was introduced as an ornamental and for wildlife food and cover. It has since escaped and naturalized in many areas. Due to the nitrogen-fixing nodules on its roots, autumn olive is able to colonize and dominate sites with poor soils such as abandoned fields, waste areas, and roadsides. Its primary mode of dispersal is through its abundant fruits, which are readily dispersed by birds over long distances.

Oriental bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus

This invasive vine was introduced from China and Japan as an ornamental, and has since escaped and become problematic in many areas. It prefers open sites such as roadsides and hedgerows but will also persist in shaded forested areas. In the northeastern U.S. oriental bittersweet appears to be displacing the native bittersweet, which occurs in similar habitats. Dense stands of the climbing vines grow rapidly on native vegetation, constricting their stems and shading out the native plants.

Crown vetch

Coronilla varia

This low-growing invasive plant is originally from Europe and southeast Asia and grows in open disturbed sites such as roadsides, old fields, and stream banks. It is commonly sold and planted as a ground cover but can become invasive, growing over and shading out native vegetation. It spreads rapidly through seeds and by its extensive underground root system.

Multiflora rose*Rosa multiflora*

This invasive shrub is originally from Asia and was introduced to the U.S. for wildlife food and cover. It has since become naturalized and invasive in many areas throughout eastern and central U.S. It grows commonly in old fields, on roadsides and in forest openings and edges forming dense impenetrable thickets that shade out native plants. Wildlife aid in its spread by dispersing seeds and it also spreads vegetatively through its underground root system.

Japanese barberry*Berberis thunbergii*

This invasive shrub was introduced from Japan as an ornamental plant and is still commonly sold by nurseries for gardens and landscaping. It tolerates of a wide range of conditions, from old fields to young shaded woods. Once established it can form dense, spreading thickets that shade out other native understory species. It spreads both by seeds and from stump sprouts when it is cut.

Spotted knapweed*Centaurea maculosa*
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This invasive plant was introduced from Europe as a contaminant in crop seed. It produces numerous (1000 or more) seeds per plant that is easily dispersed and can remain viable in the soil for five years or more. It tolerates dry and sandy soils and is commonly found on disturbed sites such as roadsides, abandoned fields and gravel pits. Because it is such an aggressive weed and has no natural pests, this plant displaces native vegetation at rapid rates.

Honeysuckles*Lonicera spp.*

Many of the honeysuckles that are common in Pennsylvania are invasive shrubs that were introduced from Eurasia as an ornamental and for wildlife. They have become naturalized in many areas where they outcompete native plants leading to a loss of diversity. Because they often leaf-out before most native plants in the spring, they are able to gain a competitive advantage for soil nutrients and light. Honeysuckles spread through their rooting stems or by their seeds, which are dispersed by wildlife.

Queen Anne's Lace*Daucus carota*

This invasive perennial was introduced from Europe and is a common weed of old fields and roadsides throughout Pennsylvania. Although not always an invasive plant, in highly disturbed areas it can spread rapidly and form dense cover, outcompeting native plants in the area. It is commonly found along roadsides and other disturbed areas.

White sweet clover*Melilotus alba*

This invasive plant was introduced from Europe and Asia and in the past has been used in agriculture as a forage crop and soil builder. It is still widely planted as a wildlife cover crop and for the production of honey, as bees are strongly attracted to it. It commonly grows along roadsides, in pastures, and abandoned fields where it can spread rapidly and displace native vegetation. It spreads primarily by seed so management of this plant involves removal of the flowers before they mature into seeds.