

Autumn olive



Asiatic honeysuckle



Common buckthorn



Novi Woody Invasive Species Removals

Novi has been actively working to remove trees and shrubs that have taken over some of our parks. These are known as alien invasive woody plants, which simply means that they are tree or shrub species that originated in other areas of the country or world and came to Michigan intentionally or accidentally. They are considered invasive if they reproduce and spread to the extent that they have a significant negative impact on the natural habitat.

Plants such as common buckthorn, glossy buckthorn, Asian honeysuckle, autumn olive, privet and Oriental bittersweet all originated in Asia or Europe, and were brought to the United States for various reasons. While they may have been planted somewhere intentionally, most have been spread by birds who eat the berries and drop the seeds as they fly about and perch in trees. The first five species mentioned are small trees or large shrubs that spread rapidly, put out lots of seeds and sometimes are so dense that they crowd out native plants (shrubs, trees and wildflowers), changing healthy habitats into green ecological deserts.



What we're doing

In order to return the open land to a healthy habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, we have been cutting down the woody invasive plants and treating the cut stumps with an herbicide so they won't re-sprout. There is no danger of the herbicide harming people or animals as they herbicide is applied in very low quantities directly to the stump. After a year or two natural vegetation typically rebounds. We also keep an eye on treated areas, and occasionally plant desirable species if the area does not rebound satisfactorily. In cases like Rotary Park, where we have cleared a lot of buckthorn along the trail south of the parking lot, we have seen a strong rebound in grasses, sedges and wildflowers, and increased butterfly populations in the area.

Since 2015 we have removed primarily common buckthorn as it has been the most common, but have also removed the other species mentioned above when it was discovered. We have cleared sizable areas in Ella Mae Power Park, ITC Sports Park, Rotary Park and Village Woods Lake Park, and plan to continue the effort in those parks and others.

Oriental bittersweet



Oriental bittersweet

Glossy buckthorn



Privet

What you can do

Remove invasive species in your own yard. As mentioned before, birds spread the seeds, so if you have buckthorn in your yard, it is likely a seed source for other areas. While the birds do eat the fruit, it is not as nutritious for birds as native shrubs' and trees' fruit and can even cause them intestinal distress.

Please contact us before removing vegetation from your yard, to be sure that you are removing invasive species as clearing wooded areas in your yard of native species is not allowed.

If you have questions about what you think you have, feel free to contact the city Landscape Architect, Rick Meader, at (248) 735-5621 or rmeader@cityofnovi.org.