



The Shooting Star NEWSLETTER

of the
Illinois Native Plant Society – Southern Chapter

MAY 2011

INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS MONTH

Next Monthly Meeting
May 17th @ 6:30pm
Carbondale Township Hall
217 East Main, Carbondale, IL
Chris Evans, board member and
Invasive Species Biologist, will present
“Invasive Species Awareness”

Next Month:
No regular monthly meeting.

Illinois
Invasive Species



Awareness
Month

May 7th – Invaders of the Forest presentation and garlic mustard pull – Cache River Wetlands

May 14th – Invasive Species Removal – Giant City State Park

May 15th – Weed Watch Invasive Weed ID and Wine Party – Pomona Winery

May 17th – Invasive Species Presentation – Southern Illinois Native Plant Society

May 22nd – Endangered Species Day presentations and hikes – Giant City State Park

May 26th – Pond and Aquatic Weed Management Workshop – Williamson County SWCD

**Please visit the website (www.illinoisinvasives.org) for details on the events*

The Renz lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Agronomy Department and UW-Extension is pleased to present a series of videos for the identification of invasive plants. Currently there are 13 videos with 6 to 10 more planned for release this coming field season. These videos can be found at the new UW-Extension Weed Science website:
<http://fyi.uwex.edu/weedsci/category/videos/>

Angie Shelton at Indiana University has created a new website on predicting the spread of invasive species, with a focus on her research on Japanese stiltgrass. The information will be of interest to both land managers and researchers. Take a look at <http://www.indiana.edu/~preserve/InvasiveSpread>
To hear Angie's talk on the topic from the Stiltgrass Summit, hosted by River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area last summer, visit <http://www.rtrcwma.org/stiltgrass/>

A Word About Invasive Species Awareness Month

By Chris Evans: On March 29, 2011, Governor Quinn officially proclaimed May 2011, as Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month (ISAM). As part of ISAM, groups from across the state are organizing educational events, invasive plant hikes, and volunteer workdays. Press releases, publications, awards, and events are all geared towards raising awareness about invasive species in Illinois. All of us members of the Native Plant Society understand very clearly the value in native species and intact communities, which is why we need to be concerned about invasive species.

These invaders can drastically alter the native systems, displacing native plant species, reducing wildlife habitat, disrupting ecosystem functioning and generally adding stressors to our native communities that could have long-lasting impacts.

Not all exotic species are invasive. In fact, only around 1% of those introduced end up as invasive species. Here in southern Illinois we have about 25-30 plant species that are considered invasive and only about ten of those are very invasive. The problem of course is that those few plants are doing a lot of damage. If you've hiked into any of the natural areas in southern Illinois, you've likely seen bush honeysuckle, Japanese stiltgrass, or garlic mustard growing. And if you've visited these sites over time, no doubt you've noticed that these plants are increasing in number. Having only lived in southern Illinois for a little over 4 years now, I've already noticed a drastic increase in the occurrence of invasive species. Watching once common native plant species being replaced by the aggressive invaders such as Oriental bittersweet is not a pretty sight and can be heartbreaking for those that love and value native species. Attending one of the ISAM events occurring in May would be a great way to learn more about invasive species. Also, consider helping to manage these invaders by volunteering at a work day, getting more involved with a local Friends Group or working with your neighbors to form a local invasive species coalition. To find out more about Invasive Species Awareness Month, please check out our website (www.illinoisinvasives.org) or facebook page (www.facebook.com/illinoisisam).



Rim Rock Trail, Gallatin County

Last Month's Events

By Chris Benda: The Treasures of the Shawnee National Forest presentation in Harrisburg last month was well attended and garnered some support for the new Friends of the Shawnee National Forest group. However, major thunderstorms kept most people inside for the companion hike at the Rim Rock National Recreation Trail the following Saturday. Unbelievably, the rain held out for the three of us that were foolish enough to drive out to the site. We completed the loop around the rock escarpment in less than two hours. White Trilliums, Wild Columbine, Yellow Star Grass, Fern-leaved Phacelia, Spiderworts, Sweet Cicely, Doll's Eyes, and literally hundreds of Shooting Stars were observed flowering along the nature trail. More photos can be found on our facebook page.



Japanese Stiltgrass - *Microstegium vimineum*

IDENTIFICATION

Japanese stiltgrass is an annual grass considered to be one of the most aggressively spreading invasive plants throughout forestlands in southern Illinois. Stiltgrass is a warm season grass, so it germinates late in the spring and flowers in late summer, and fruits/seeds generally appear in early fall. It is a weak rooted and sprawling grass that can grow to heights of 6 feet, though it is usually much shorter. Taller plants usually lay flat along the ground or propped up against other vegetation. Plants often grow in thick patches, with each individual plant usually having multiple stems. The leaves are short and wide with smooth edges and a noticeable silvery midrib on older leaves. The flowers and fruits are borne on thin, often branched spikes on the top of a delicate stem. In the fall, the tops of the plant turn purple or brown in color, giving this plant one of its other common names, browntop. In winter, the thatch is a very noticeable bright tan to orange color.

DIAGNOSTIC CHARACTERISTICS

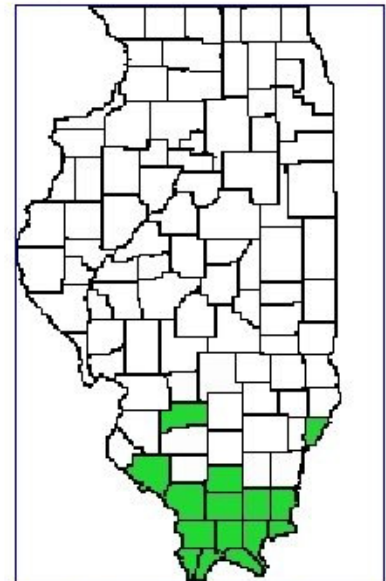
Multi-stemmed growth



Bright thatch

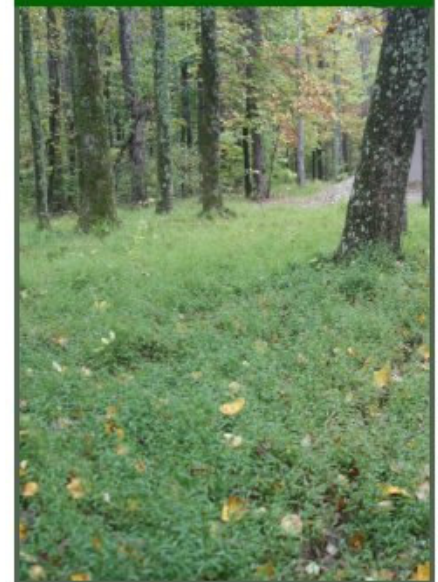


Leaves with silver midrib



Illinois Distribution

Infestation



Habitat

Japanese stiltgrass can be found in a variety of habitats. It is most often an invader of moist forests, but can also be found on roadsides, ditches, field edges, old fields, upland forests including coniferous, wet meadows, and intermittent streams. Stiltgrass grows best, and produces the most seed, in partial to full sun conditions but can also readily invade mature, shaded forests. The seeds are easily spread by equipment, contaminated soil, mud on hikers boots, and flood waters. Infestations are likely to start along a trail, roadside, or waterway and then rapidly move throughout the corridor and into the adjacent forestlands. Stiltgrass is often accidentally introduced or encouraged by practices that disturbed the soil or increase light into a forest, such as logging, prescribed fire, trail building, ditch maintenance, or roadside mowing.

Impacts

Once introduced, Japanese stiltgrass can form dense stands that shade and compete with native understory flora, lowering native species diversity. It can quickly become the dominate vegetation once introduced. Stiltgrass, because of a high shade tolerance, has the potential to invade high-quality mature forests, once thought to be relatively resistant to invasion. Infestation have no value as a wildlife food. The dense thatch of older infestations can be a fire hazard and may impede tree seedling establishment. Once established, stiltgrass is very difficult to remove and spreads rapidly. For further information on the impacts and management of Japanese stiltgrass, view the presentations from the 2010 Stiltgrass Summit at www.rtrcwma.org/stiltgrass.

Stiltgrass is actively spreading northward in Illinois, be on the lookout for the high priority invasive species

Developed by Christopher Evans, River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area, February 2011

The CWMA is a partnership between the Illinois Department of Natural Resources • Illinois Department of Agriculture • Illinois Department of Transportation • Shawnee National Forest • Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge • Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge • USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service • USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • University of Illinois - Extension • Southern Illinois University at Carbondale • The Nature Conservancy • Shawnee Resource Conservation & Development Area



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS WEEDWATCH PROJECT VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

YOU ARE INVITED!! WEEDS AND WINE VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT & INVASIVE PLANT ID PARTY!

Why: Invasive plant species are invading our beautiful natural areas. They are aggressively overtaking or displacing native species causing a drastic reduction in our native biodiversity and natural beauty. Discovering weeds before they become well-established is critical to reducing damage to ecosystem integrity, preventing the loss of habitat for rare plants and animals, and preventing costly natural resource management.

Who: Everyone who has been, currently is, or wants to be involved in the Weed Watch Project.

What: Invasive Weed ID and Wine Party.

When: Sunday, May 15 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Where: Pomona Winery, 2865 Hickory Ridge Road,
Pomona, IL 62975

What to Bring: Drinking water for the trail and some cash to buy yourself a glass of delicious Pomona Winery apple wine or non-alcoholic soft drink. Snacks and munchies will be provided--but extra contributions won't be turned down!

We'll kick off the party by explaining what WeedWatch is and the various ways you can get involved, then professional botanists will lead an invasive weed identification training. Following the training we'll gather back at the winery to celebrate the accomplishments made over the past three years, to celebrate the future of the project, to get acquainted with old and new friends, and to have fun!

Please RSVP to terri.treacy@sierradub.org or 618-521-1030.



CHANGES COMING TO WEEDWATCH

We are developing some new approaches to data collection that will accommodate a broader range of physical ability, interest level and time commitment. If you can't come to the party, but are interested in learning more about how you can get involved in WeedWatch, please contact Terri at terri.treacy@sierradub.org or 618-521-1030.

WEEDWATCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WeedWatch Volunteers have contributed hundreds of hours in the field collecting hundreds of points and polygons. This data, all entered into a central database, has been used by agencies to treat infested areas, or in the case of the Shawnee National Forest, to help in the development of the Invasive Species Plan. This plan is due to be released soon for public comment and implementation (barring any major public resistance).



The Illinois WeedWatch Project has been made possible through a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Preservation Fund.

Directions to Pomona Winery -- Google Map

The winery is easily reached from Highway 127 by following the wine trail signs and arrows. If you haven't been to the winery before look forward to a scenic 25 to 35 minute drive through the lovely Shawnee Hills Forest once you leave Highway 127 (either the southern or the northern routes off the highway take about the same time). And, yes, from Highway 127 it is the longest 9.1 miles that you will ever drive--so relax, enjoy the scenery, and travel safe!



We have a beautiful facebook page for the Southern Chapter of the Illinois Native Plant Society! Follow this link and you can browse the photo albums without having to sign up...or if you have a facebook profile, please click on the "like" button to add to your favorite pages.
www.facebook.com/southernillinoisplants

Synandra Hike cancelled due to flooding

The *Synandra* hike that was planned for May 15th has been cancelled because of high flood waters in the valley where the *Syndandra* occurs. It is likely that the plants will not flower this year even if we manage a way to get to the site. We will try again next year!



Prairie Plant Identification Tour May 19th

Rhonda and Robert Rothrock are pleased to invite you to their prairie refuge called Sunnyside place in rural Jackson county! The prairie garden was created almost 10 years ago as a place for local prairie plant ecotypes. Meet at their place near the Little Grand Canyon on May 19th at 6pm. With hundreds of species planted here, there is always something new in bloom. Directions: The Rothrocks property is 4 miles north of Little Grand Canyon at 7398 Hickory Ridge Road.

Related May Events

- May 7th: 2011 St. Louis Area Undergraduate Research Symposium at the Touch of Nature Environmental Center
For more information, visit <http://reach.siuc.edu/stlaurs>
- May 13th-14th: Festival of the Bluffs and Bioblitz at the Salt Lick Point Land & Water Reserve in Valmeyer Illinois, <http://www.clifftopalliance.org/festival.pdf>
- May 14th: Wildflower Hike at Trillium Trail, Giant City State Park at 12pm. Trail leader - Chris Evans.
- May 28th: What's This Tree? Interpretive hike at Heron Pond Trail from 1pm to 3pm.

Visit the Beautify Southern Illinois calendar at <http://www.beautifysouthernillinois.org/events/calendar.htm> for more!

Coming in June



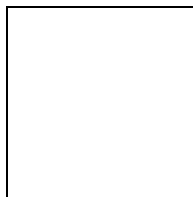
The Friends of the Cache River Basin are pleased to host Natural Areas Ecologist, Chris Benda, on June 11th for a slideshow presentation and tour of Cave Creek Glade in the Cache River region of Johnson County! The presentation will start at 1pm at the Barkhausen Wetlands Center with a tour of the limestone glade to follow. Those interested may continue on to Wineaux's winery across from Heron Pond afterward.



SAVE THE DATE!

INPS 30th ANNIVERSARY - 2011 ANNUAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 23 – 25th at CAMP ONDESSONK, Ozark, IL

INPS SOUTHERN CHAPTER
P.O. Box 271
Carbondale, IL 62903-0271



southernillinoisplants@gmail.com
www.ill-inps.org



Dodecatheon frenchii –
French's Shooting Star

Board Members

President: Chris Benda
Vice-President: Chris Evans
Secretary: Sara Koropchak
Treasurer: Rhonda Rothrock
At-large: Nancy Garwood
At-large: Jody Shimp

INPS 2011 CALENDAR

Upcoming Events:	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
May 17 th	Chris Evans	<i>Invasive Species Awareness Month</i>	CTH
May 19 th	Robert Rothrock	<i>Prairie Plant ID</i>	7398 Hickory Ridge Rd
June 11 th	Chris Benda	<i>Cave Creek Limestone Glade</i>	BWC
August 16 th	John Schwegman	<i>Rare and Little Known Plants of IL</i>	CTH
August 20 th	John Schwegman	<i>Hike at Wolf Creek Botanical Area</i>	Tamms, IL

CTH = Carbondale Township Hall, 217 East Main Street
BWC = Barkhausen Wetland Center, Rt 37, Cypress, IL

Precedent-setting Evidence of the Benefits of Biodiversity



National Science Foundation
WHERE DISCOVERIES BEGIN

Frequent reports of accelerating species losses invariably raise questions about why such losses matter and why we should work to conserve biodiversity.

Biologists have traditionally responded to such questions by citing societal benefits that are often presumed to be offered by biodiversity--benefits like controlling pests and diseases, promoting the productivity of fisheries, and helping to purify air and water, among many others. Nevertheless, many of these presumed benefits are ...read more at

http://www.nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=118945&WT.mc_id=USNSF_51&WT.mc_ev=click