



# The Door County Invasive Species Team

*Empowering Door County citizens and municipalities with the information, tools, and skills to tackle invasive species.*

## Door County Invasive Species News

While invasive species control slows down during winter, things do not slow down for DCIST. Staff members are busy writing reports for the many grants that fund invasive species management. In addition, they are seeking new grants and writing proposals to continue these efforts. DCIST is pleased to announce that it was selected for funding through the Wisconsin DNR's Surface Water Grant program. These funds will support continued work on monitoring and controlling phragmites, knotweed, and purple loosestrife.

Looking forward to the 2025 season, DCIST will continue its non-native phragmites, teasel, knotweed, wild parsnip, and purple loosestrife monitoring and control efforts throughout the county. DCIST will continue working with partners to inventory woody invasive species in some of Door County's ecologically sensitive habitats. Additionally, surveys will be conducted for new invaders such as yellow flag iris, common tansy, and hairy willow herb to better understand their prevalence. DCIST will continue to participate in the statewide Clean Boats Clean Waters efforts, focusing on the Carmody and Pinney Park boat launches. These efforts include having inspectors at these boat launches to engage with boaters about the steps they need to take to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.



*Photo courtesy of DCIST*

## Don't Rush Spring Cleanup: Benefit Pollinators & Your Garden

As spring approaches, it's tempting to tidy up flower beds, but cutting back vegetation too early can harm your garden's ecosystem. Many beneficial insects, like bees and butterflies, overwinter in last year's plant material and need time to safely emerge when temperatures consistently reach 50°F for at least four consecutive days. Additionally, leaving dead vegetation a bit longer protects fragile new growth, enriches the soil with nutrients as it decomposes, and helps retain moisture. By waiting to clean up your garden, you're not only supporting pollinators but also setting the stage for a healthier, more vibrant landscape all season long!



*Photo courtesy of Susan Day*

When the time is right to clean up your flower beds, start by assessing the health of your plants. Look for new growth and only remove dead or damaged material, leaving healthy parts intact. Next, gather the right tools for the job – pruners, garden shears, and a rake are essential for careful removal without disturbing the soil. Remember to wear gloves to protect your hands. As you begin the cleanup, work gradually rather than clearing everything at once. Start with larger dead branches and leaves, then move to smaller items. This approach allows you to spot any emerging

plants and avoid accidentally damaging them. By following these steps, you'll ensure a thorough yet gentle spring cleanup that sets your garden up for a thriving season ahead.

## Native Species Highlights

### Wisconsin Native Flower Species – Upcoming Spring Blooms

Though snow may still cover the ground, spring ephemerals will soon appear. The word "ephemeral," from the Greek *ephēmeros* ("lasting a day"), describes these plants' brief life cycle: growth, flowering, and dieback all occur within days or weeks. They maximize this short time, taking advantage of ideal temperature, moisture, and sunlight. These early blooms provide crucial pollen and nectar for emerging insects. Many ephemerals rely on ants for seed dispersal; their seeds have fat-rich attachments (elaiosomes) that ant larvae eat. Limited seed dispersal (up to six feet) makes these plants vulnerable. Invasive species like buckthorn, garlic mustard, and dame's rocket can outcompete natives, and it can take up to 20 years for ephemeral populations to recover. Door County boasts many spring ephemerals; learn more online or at your local native plant nursery.

**Dutchman's breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*):** Closely related to the popular garden plant, bleeding hearts, Dutchman's breeches is sometimes confused with squirrel corn, though that is a different, less common *Dicentra* species in Wisconsin. The genus name comes from the Greek words *dis*, meaning twice, and *kentron*, meaning a spur, referring to the flower's two spurs. The specific epithet *cucullaria* means "hood-like." 3-14 white, stalked flowers dangle from a stem that rises above the leaves. The flowers have two opposing spurs, giving them a distinctive triangular shape resembling a pair of breeches. The leaves are finely divided into lacy segments.



Photo courtesy of DCIST

**Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*):** The genus name honors Franz Carl Mertens (1764-1831), professor of botany at Bremen. The emerging foliage is deep purple but quickly turns green. Smooth, oval leaves, become much smaller toward the top. Blooming in mid-spring, loose clusters of flowers range in color from purplish-pink to blue. The flowers, up to one inch long, are pollinated primarily by bumblebees and other long-tongued bees, but are also visited by various butterflies, skippers, hummingbird moths, flower flies (syrphids), bee flies, and hummingbirds.



Photo courtesy of Johnson's Nursery



Photo courtesy of Johnson's Nursery

**Hepatica (*Hepatica acutiloba* and *Hepatica americana*):** The genus name is often said to be derived from the Greek word *anemos*, meaning wind. Here in Door County, we have two species of *Hepatica* that differ only in their leaves. Hepaticas are among the first flowers to bloom in spring, at which time the new leaves are very small. They are also known as liverleaf or liverwort due to the supposed resemblance of their leaves to the human liver. Flower stalks can extend up to 12 inches high, and the leaves are green and glossy. The leaves are evergreen, turning a russet to purple color in the fall.

## Invasive Species Workshops, News, and Volunteer Opportunities

### Bluebird Nest Box Workshops

**Dates:** March 15, 2025 at 10:00am

**Location:** The Ridges Sanctuary

Eastern bluebird populations are back on the rise thanks to the help of nest box building enthusiasts! During this workshop you will continue to help bluebird populations by learning what they need to survive and creating a nest box to take home. Charlotte Lukes will be joining us to teach us why assisting these little bluebirds is so important. Tools and materials for one box provided.



*Photo courtesy of Keith Kennedy*

To find more information and register, visit [The Ridges](#).

### Designing Native Plant Gardens for Pollinators

**Dates:** March 10, 2025 at 1:30pm

**Location:** Crossroads at Big Creek

You can design a native plant garden that will be a pollinator magnet. Native plants are beautiful, low-maintenance, adaptable and great sources of nutrition and habitat for butterflies, bees, moths, hummingbirds and more! In this pre-recorded webinar, we will learn about design principles and some native plants that are great to grow for pollinators and can thrive in sunny or shady conditions.



*Photo courtesy of DCIST*

To see all the events, check out Crossroad's [Event Calendar](#).

### Midwest Crane Count

**Date:** April 12, 2025 at 5:30am

The International Crane Foundation sponsors the Annual Midwest Crane Count as a part of its mission to conserve the world's 15 species of cranes and the natural communities on which they depend. Observations of Sandhill Cranes can lend insight into threatened crane species, including the endangered Whooping Crane.

FREE event. Donations appreciated!

Please contact Tony Kizonas at [tony@ridgessanctuary.org](mailto:tony@ridgessanctuary.org) for more information or if you plan to participate.



*Photo courtesy of the International Crane Foundation*



## Invasive Species Workshops, News, and Volunteer Opportunities

### Get Ready to Combat Spongy Moths!

Spring is on its way, and so is the annual return of spongy moth caterpillars. Now is the time for landowners to locate and properly dispose of spongy moth egg masses to reduce the population of these hungry caterpillars, which can cause significant tree damage.

Each egg mass contains hundreds of eggs, so removing them can make a real difference. You have two options:

- Scrape the egg masses into a container of soapy water, soak, and trash them.
- Spray the masses with horticultural, mineral, or neem oil.



Photo courtesy of Bill McNee, WDNR



Photo courtesy of Bill McNee, WDNR

Check trees and outdoor objects for egg masses to predict caterpillar levels this summer and determine if further action is needed. While a population decline was noted last summer, numbers are still high enough to cause problems in some areas. Remember that old, non-viable egg masses will appear faded and feel spongy. Target preferred tree species like oak and birch, especially in dry, sandy areas. For more information on spongy moth control, including egg mass removal, population survey methods, and insecticide applications, visit the [Wisconsin Spongy Moth Resource Center](#). Consulting an arborist or forester can also be a valuable resource.

### Plan Your Garden with Care: Choose Native, Not Invasive!

As you plan your spring garden, be vigilant about invasive plants. Many invasive species that harm Wisconsin forests started as garden ornamentals. Even though Wisconsin regulates 145 plants under [Invasive Species Rule NR 40](#), it's crucial to check your plant selections before buying and choose native plants whenever possible.

Wildflower seed mixes can be particularly sneaky, so read labels carefully. Seeds for invasive species might be mixed with native wildflowers. If you're unsure if a plant is invasive, search online using the plant name along with "invasive" and "Wisconsin."

Invasive plants spread rapidly, outcompeting other plants, reducing biodiversity, harming animal habitats, and increasing fire risk. Native plants are adapted to the local environment and attract beneficial insects and pollinators. Find a list of [Wisconsin native plant nurseries](#) to help you choose native plants and seeds.

The Midwest Invasive Plant Network provides a helpful [brochure for gardeners and landscapers](#), listing invasive plants to avoid and suggesting suitable alternatives. They also offer a free mobile app for download.



Photo courtesy of Peter M. Dziuk, MN  
Wildflowers. Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)



Photo courtesy of Johnson's Nursery. Common ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

## Spring Tree Planter Rentals

### Door County Soil & Water Conservation Department

Door County Soil & Water Conservation Department has three, custom tree planting machines for Spring 2025 rental. These planters are perfect for tree plantings of all sizes, and make row planting large quantities of trees quick and easy.

In 2023-2024, Door County residents planted nearly 60,000 trees with the use of the tree planters. These planters attach directly to the tractor's three-point hitch (category 2 or 3), and weigh approximately 1200 pounds. A 40 horse plus tractor is strongly recommended for efficient plantings.



Costs associated with the planter rental include a \$20 base fee + \$50 refundable deposit. An additional \$15 per 1,000 trees is also added to the total cost. Planting schedules can be tight, so being prepared and keeping on time is important. Be sure you have enough help. A tractor driver, two people in the machine, and additional person(s) getting trees ready makes for a good crew. Keep the nursery stock cool and moist between storage and planting. If you are interested in renting a planter this Spring or for more information, please contact Beau Schartner at (920)-746-2213 or via email at ([bschartner@co.door.wi.us](mailto:bschartner@co.door.wi.us)).



Rental agreement forms and payment must be submitted to the Door County Soil & Water Conservation Department prior to the use of the planting machine.

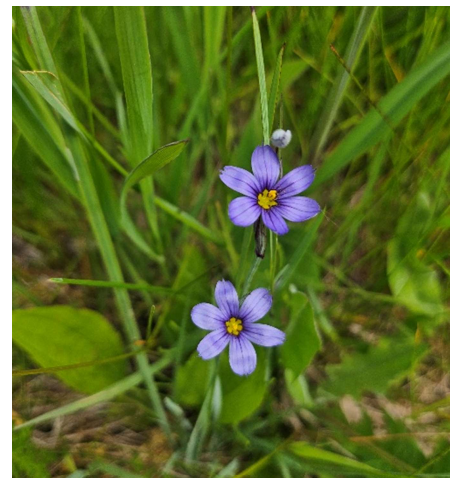
Please make checks payable to Door County SWCD.

## Upcoming Plant Sales

Save the Date! The Door County Master Gardeners Annual Plant Sale will be May 23 and 24 at the Peninsular Agricultural Research Station. They will be offering perennials, annuals, natives, vegetables, herbs & more! Check their website [here](#) for more information in the coming weeks.

The Kewaunee County Garden Club will be having their spring plant sale on May 24 at Lakehaven Hall in Kewaunee, WI. More information can be found [here](#).

The Fox Valley Plant Fair is happening March, 15 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Neenah, WI. All proceeds from this event will go towards helping care for the surrendered pets at J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue. More information can be found [here](#).



Outside the Door County area, find a native plant sale near you on the WDNR [native plants webpage](#).



The Door County Invasive Species Team – Jason Miller, Coordinator  
DCIST Message Line: 920-746-5955; Email: [dcist1@gmail.com](mailto:dcist1@gmail.com)  
Check out our website at <https://doorinvasives.org>



## Conference

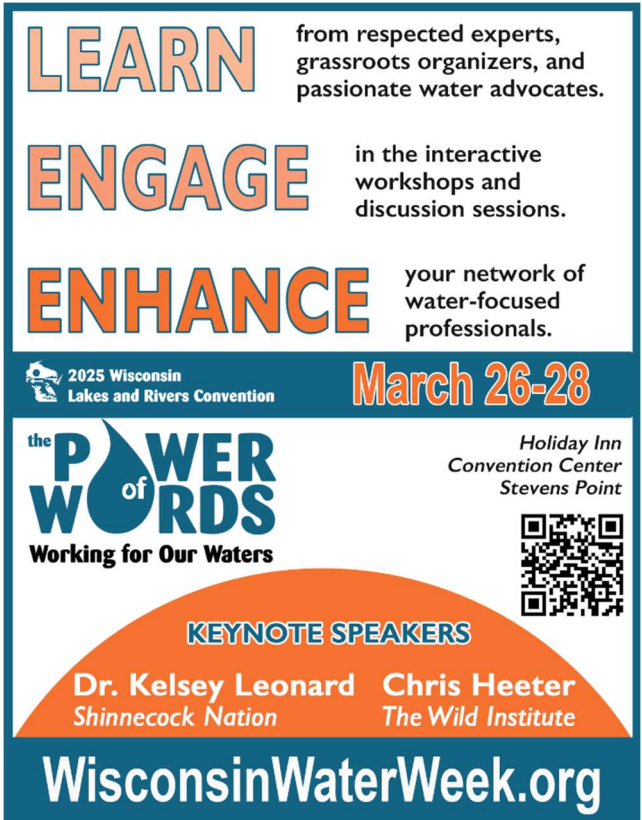
# Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention

March 26-28, 2025

Holiday Inn Convention Center, Stevens Point

## “The Power of Words: Working for Our Waters”

The power of words is immense, especially when advocating for our waters. By raising awareness, promoting conservation efforts, and crafting compelling messages, words can inspire action and drive positive change to protect our water resources for future generations.



**LEARN** from respected experts, grassroots organizers, and passionate water advocates.


**ENGAGE** in the interactive workshops and discussion sessions.

**ENHANCE** your network of water-focused professionals.

2025 Wisconsin Lakes and Rivers Convention **March 26-28**

the **POWER of WORDS**  
Working for Our Waters

Holiday Inn Convention Center Stevens Point



**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Dr. Kelsey Leonard** Shinnecock Nation  
**Chris Heeter** The Wild Institute

**WisconsinWaterWeek.org**



Please join us for an exciting event to share information and foster collaboration among conservation practitioners, researchers and stakeholders working in the bay of Green Bay, Lower Fox River watershed, Green Bay's west shore and Door Peninsula.

The morning includes an opportunity for networking, regional and legislative updates, lightning talks, and student posters. Don't miss this great opportunity to hear from partners involved in exciting restoration, monitoring, and other conservation projects around the region.



The Door County Invasive Species Team – Jason Miller, Coordinator  
DCIST Message Line: 920-746-5955; Email: [dcist1@gmail.com](mailto:dcist1@gmail.com)  
Check out our website at <https://doorinvasives.org>



## Well Testing


**UWO** UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**OSHKOSH**

# Spring 2025 DOOR COUNTY

## PRIVATE WELL MONITORING PROGRAM

### TESTING PARAMETERS

-  Total coliforms/*E. coli* (quantification)
-  Nitrate (Nitrate + nitrite as N)

**Cost is only \$30\***

*\*Discounted rate for the first 300 registrants; \$45 for those registering after the first 300 registrants.*

*Optional arsenic, pH, alkalinity, hardness and iron tests available at an additional cost of \$25*

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The University of WI Oshkosh has been offering discounted well water quality testing through this program since 2019. The goal of this program is to provide education about the importance of testing your well water as well as build a database of groundwater quality data in Door County.

### HOW IT WORKS

- RSVP using the link or QR code below by March 28<sup>th</sup>
- Receive sampling kit in mail
- Attend a virtual forum to learn how to sample
- Return your kit April 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> at designated drop-off locations
- Receive your results & countywide summary of study



**Registration accepted through March 28<sup>th</sup>**

**RSVP online at [uwosh.edu/doorco-wells-spring25](https://uwosh.edu/doorco-wells-spring25) or using the QR code**

*\*Prepayment using a credit card is accepted when you RSVP online, otherwise mailed checks are accepted made out to UW Oshkosh. Note that sampling kits will not be mailed out until payment is received.*

**Sample drop-off is April 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> – mark your calendars!**

For more information, contact Jackie Behrens at [eric@uwosh.edu](mailto:eric@uwosh.edu) or (920) 424-3148

DCIST relies on volunteers to help collect data on where invasive plants and animals are found in Door County.

If you're interested in helping, DCIST can provide training on the use of handheld GPS units or you can also use the GLEDN app to report findings via your smartphone. Contact DCIST at [dcist1@gmail.com](mailto:dcist1@gmail.com) for more information or learn how to download and use the app at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/wifdn/>.

Keep an eye out for our next newsletter and keep up to date on our DCIST website at <https://doorinvasives.org>. We will be posting any and all additional training opportunities & educational materials as we receive them.

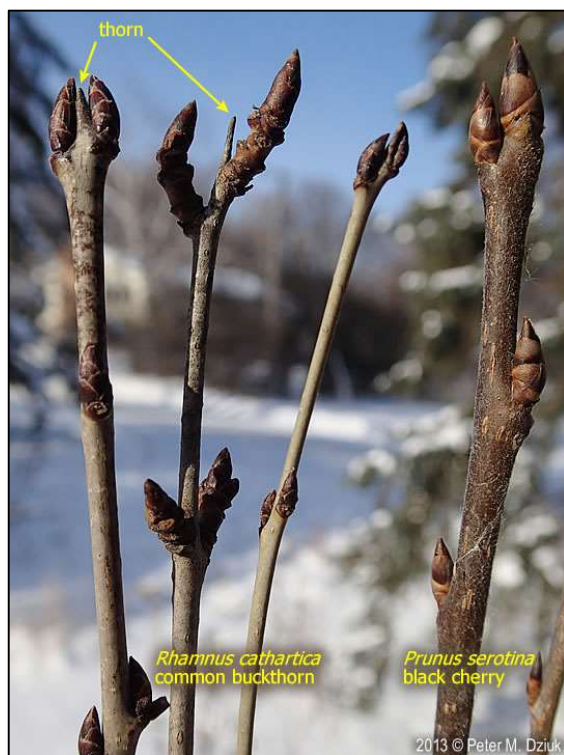


## Winter ID: Spotting Invasive Buckthorn and Honeysuckle without Leaves

If you have woody invasive species like buckthorn or honeysuckle on your property, winter is a great time to remove them and begin the restoration process. But without leaves, you might be wondering how to identify which shrubs to remove and which ones to keep. Below are some key features to look for and some common native lookalike species. More information about other invasive species identification can be found here under [Winter Weed Identification Fact Sheets](#).

**Buckthorn:** In Door County, both common and glossy buckthorn are found. Glossy buckthorn tends to prefer wetter sites than common buckthorn. Common buckthorn has brown to silver bark that is shiny when young and dark grey to black and scaly when mature; inner bark is bright orange. Buds are found in pairs at the end of branches and along buds are mostly opposite. Twigs often end in stout thorns. Glossy buckthorn has gray to brown lenticles and lacks thorns. Buds are soft, fuzzy, and rust-colored, and are found at the end of branches.

**Look-alikes:** *Prunus* species (cherries, plums) have similar-looking bark, but buds are alternate, and twigs do not have thorns. Young stems of *Viburnum lentago* have similar-looking bark and occupy similar sites as glossy buckthorn; however, it will have opposite buds that appear swollen at the base.



Photos (starting above and going clockwise): Comparison of buds of common buckthorn to black cherry; comparison of bark between buckthorn and black cherry; fuzzy buds of glossy buckthorn; buds of *Viburnum lentago*.

Photo credit: Peter M. Dziuk, MN Wildflowers and Leslie J Mehrhoff, Bugwood.org



**Honeysuckle:** There are multiple species of honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp) in Door County, but not all are invasive. Our non-native honeysuckles can be identified by the many arching branches with opposite buds. Additionally, the bark is grey and shreddy. The center of the branches (pith) is brownish and hollow. Learn more about exotic honeysuckles [here](#).

**Look-alikes:** Elderberry and ninebark can have a similar branching growth form. Elderberry has opposite branching but the bark is not shreddy. Ninebark has shreddy bark but alternate branching. Native honeysuckle shrub branches will have a pith that appears white.



Photos (starting in upper left and going clockwise): Growth form of honeysuckle in winter; picture of pith of non-native honeysuckle; shreddy bark of Ninebark; shreddy bark of non-native honeysuckle.

Photo credit: Gary Fewless, UWGB; Peter M. Dziuk, MN Wildflowers; and Leslie Mehrhoff, Bugwood.org