



# 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

### Help Keep 2020 Behind Us!

The 2020 holiday season is beginning to wrap up and as the decorations come down many people are left debating what to do with their live holiday wreaths, trees, etc. Wisconsin produces more than 1.8 million Christmas trees and 600,000 wreaths annually, helping supply the more than 25 million American households with real Christmas trees, and millions of American households with live wreaths. Live trees and decorations are wonderful, and they have many benefits. 400 million trees are grown on tree farms across the country, providing clean air and water, habitat for wildlife, and erosion control. Most of the 15,000 Christmas tree farms across the United States are family-owned, and Christmas tree farms provide more than 100,000 jobs. There is one drawback, these live decorations can act as a means of introducing invasive species to new areas. Live decorations might have invasive species hiding in their branches, or unknowing craftsmen may have incorporated invasive plant material into wreaths or flower arrangements. Luckily there are often options you can take to minimize the chance of introducing an invasive species into your neighborhood.

Take advantage of any local Christmas tree recycling program. Certain municipalities offer curbside pickup of the trees during a set time period. If you can't find a local Christmas Tree Recycling program, take it to your local municipal composting facility, solid waste facility, dump, or landfill. These choices are the safest way to dispose of your decorations, especially if they were not purchased from a local tree farm. It is often difficult to know the origins of pre-cut trees and natural wreaths bought from side of the road operators, big box stores, and even local stores. To be safe, assume the materials are non-local and treat them as such. Do not place non-local materials in your backyard. Over the winter and into early spring, pests, weed seeds, and tree diseases could emerge and contaminate your property. Never place unwanted plant material, including those locally sourced, in roadside ditches or natural areas. These unwanted materials could introduce invasive species into natural areas.

In 2018 and 2019 The Depart of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) found fir Christmas trees, wreaths, and other holiday decorations infested with elongate hemlock scale (an invasive insect). These contaminated decorations had been shipped to Wisconsin and presented a real threat to our coniferous forests, and Christmas tree farms. Luckily DATCP helped limit the spread and was quick to alert the public of the possible new invader. To date, elongate hemlock scale has not been documented in the wild in Wisconsin. Some other invaders commonly spread during the holidays are multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, and non-native bittersweet. All of these plants are commonly used in making holiday wreaths and decorations, then dumped into composts, wooded areas, and sides of the road allowing them to establish new populations and invade backyards and neighborhoods. For more information on these species please visit <https://doorinvasives.org/terrestrial-invasives>.



*Non-native bittersweet vine wreath.  
Photo courtesy of Jenny Noble.*



*Elongate hemlock scales. Photo  
courtesy of Eric R. Day.*



*Harvesting Christmas trees. Photo  
courtesy of Chippewa Herold.*

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## Native Species Highlights

### Wisconsin Native Species

Door County is home to many beautiful native plants. Below are a few species that highlight the importance of maintaining our native ecology. The plants below are only a sliver of the species Door County has to offer. While you are outside enjoying the natural areas in Door County, help halt invasive species by reporting any populations on the GLEDN app and landscape with native species!

**White Pine** (*Pinus strobus*): Is an upland pine, with long needles. A trick to identifying this pine vs. red pine, or even the invasive scotch pine, is white pine has needles in bunches of 5, representing each letter in the word white. Red pine, scotch pine, and jack pine have needles in bunches of 2-3 and all others have single needles.



Photo on the right courtesy of Michael Zurawski.  
Photo on the left courtesy of Gary Fewless.



Photos courtesy of USDA.

#### **Black Spruce** (*Picea mariana*):

Here in Door County we have two native spruces, white spruce and black spruce. There is a quick, and usually accurate, way to identify spruce trees. If the tree has single attached needles, pick one and place it flat between thumb and finger, if it rolls easily between them it's probably a spruce. The easiest way to tell black spruce and white spruce apart is black spruce have cones less than 1.25 inches long and white spruce have cones that are 1-2 inches long. Black spruce twigs are also hairy where as white spruce is smooth.

**White Cedar** (*Thuja occidentalis*): Also known as arborvitae, meaning "tree of life", white cedar is an evergreen tree common in Door County. The leaves of white cedar are flat and scale like. White cedar is in the cypress family, where as eastern red cedar is in the Juniper family. Although both of these trees are commonly called cedar, neither are actually related to a true cedar, which is closely related to the Fir family, and is not native to North America.



Photos courtesy of H. Zell.



Photos courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife.

**Balsam Fir** (*Abies balsamea*): This evergreen tree has flat, dark green needles with a strong balsam scent. Fir cones grow vertically pointing skyward. The bark tends to develop "blisters" of sticky and highly aromatic resin, often referred to as "pitch". This excess pitch or resin earns this tree its Latin and common name balsam, defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "an aromatic and usually oily and resinous substance flowing from various plants".

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## Invasive Species Workshops and Volunteer Opportunities



Although it is not an invasive species salt can create issues within our ecosystem and disrupt our native ecology. As temperatures continue to drop and conditions become icier it is always important to remember the impacts salt can have. Using more salt than is needed comes with a heavy price. In Wisconsin and much of the United States, chloride from salt is infiltrating into our lakes, streams and groundwater.

To sign up for a week's worth of interesting salt talks please visit: <https://www.wisaltwise.com/Take-Action/Salt-Awareness-Week>.

### Wisconsin Salt Awareness Week

January 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>

### Hemlock Rescue! Collaborating to stop the spread of hemlock woolly adelgid.

January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10-11 am

Hemlock woolly adelgid has killed hundreds of thousands of hemlock trees in eastern states, including significant areas in the Appalachian and Great Smoky mountains. When infestations began spreading in West Michigan, a team of technicians went to work to "hold the line" through rigorous survey and treatment of infested trees in an effort to save Michigan's 170 million eastern hemlocks from the same fate.

For more information visit: [https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6141463344075183888?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6141463344075183888?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).



### University of Illinois Winter Tree ID Webinar

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2pm Central

The University of Illinois is hosting a winter tree ID webinar February 1st, 3rd, & 5th. Each day will run from 2-3pm and cover a variety of topics including: Introduction and Basics of Winter Tree Identification, Winter Identification of Common Trees of Illinois, and Winter Identification of Uncommon Trees and Difficult Groups.

For more information check out the following link: <https://extension.illinois.edu/.../learn-identify-trees...>

To register for this free event please check out the following link: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/...>



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, we 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 February 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.

## Take on Teasel!

### Invasive Species Profile: Common & Cutleaf Teasel (*Dipsacus spp.*) An invader of Door County

Teasel species (*Dipsacus spp.*) are a group of invasive flowering herbaceous plants that are native to eastern Europe and Asia. They were likely introduced to North America as an ornamental plant or cultivated for its role in wool production. Teasel seed heads were used to brush woven cloth to raise the nap of the wool. There are two invasive species of teasel documented in Wisconsin: common teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) & cutleaf teasel (*Dipsacus laciniatus*).

The difference between common and cutleaf teasel is the shape of the leaves. Common teasel leaves are whole and serrated, like a romaine lettuce leaf, and cutleaf teasel leaves are lobed and serrated, like a dandelion leaf. Common & cutleaf teasel, are monocarpic perennials, they spend a year or more in a vegetative state before flowering once then dying. First year plants and consecutive vegetative growth consists only of basal leaves, leaves that grow low to the ground. Once ready to reproduce, teasel species (*spp.*) develop a tall spike with small white flowers (cutleaf) or purple flowers (common) in late June-late September growing to a height of 2-8' tall. As the plant matures the seed heads develop. Each plant produces about 2,000 seeds per plant. Seeds of teasel *spp.* can remain viable 2 years after development. Teasels usually invade open areas, including prairies, savannas, and sedge meadows, as well as roadsides and disturbed areas. Seeds of teasel species are relatively heavy resulting in seeds staying close to the site of the parent plant leading to an expansion of existing populations.

Teasel *spp.* can be treated either mechanically or chemically depending on the level of infestation. It is important to note since populations are dependent on the historic seed bank, some populations may take longer to treat no matter the means of control. Mechanical methods, such as hand-pulling and digging, can be effective on small populations. Herbicide is recommended for larger, more dense populations where removal and seed head control is not possible. For more information please visit UW Madison Renz Lab Factsheet at:

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/A3924-14.pdf>

and the Wisconsin DNR at:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/CommonTeasel.html>.

In Wisconsin, common and cutleaf teasel are listed as a restricted species under Wisconsin's Invasive Species Rule Chapter NR 40. Restricted species are those that are already present throughout the state of Wisconsin and are not likely to be eradicated and are likely to cause significant environmental and economic harm or harm to human health. The NR 40 Rule makes it illegal to transport, transfer, or introduce invasive species listed as restricted in Wisconsin. **If you find teasel species in Door County, be sure to report it using the GLEDN app!**



Photo courtesy of the Door County Invasive Species Team.



Photo on the left of common teasel courtesy of MN Department of Agriculture. Photo on the right of cutleaf teasel courtesy of Peter Dziuk.



Seed heads of teasel *spp.* photo courtesy of Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed.

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