



# 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

### Porcelain Berry Control Efforts Update



The Wisconsin DNR recently sent out a press release highlighting DCISTs recent prohibited control efforts, focusing on porcelain berry. “Thanks to the discovery and quick action by the Door County Invasive Species Team and good cooperation from the property owner, the threat from porcelain berry at this site has been contained,” said Jason Granberg, DNR invasive species specialist.

After the press release was published several landowners reached out to DCIST about potential porcelain berry populations. Through these efforts an additional two populations have been confirmed.



Fall is the perfect time to identify porcelain berry. During this time of year it has beautiful iconic fruit earning this plant its name porcelain berry. Porcelain berry could legally be sold and purchased as an ornamental prior to 2009. Remember to plant and landscape with native species whenever possible, because what could be spookier than having an invasive species lurking in your garden!



### Bat Update



Bats play an essential role in pest control, pollination, and seed dispersal. According to USFWS studies estimate that bats eat enough pests to save more than \$1 billion per year in crop damage and pesticide costs in the US corn industry alone.

The impacts on summer bat colonies from white nose syndrome (WNS) is evident; however, impacts are varied and may not be as dire based on the 2019 roost survey report. Like biologists watching populations in the east, Wisconsin has observed stabilization of little brown bat colonies including some with significant populations. What causes some summer colonies to collapse and others to persist is unclear. It could be the conditions bats are hibernating in, roost characteristics, proximity to foraging habitat, etc. Ecologists plan to continue tracking efforts and piece together the remaining mysteries for bats surviving white-nose syndrome in Wisconsin to understand the future of bat populations in the region.

White nose syndrome is a fungal disease that has claimed the lives of more than 5 million bats since its discovery in 2006. It has spread across North America at an alarming rate. The fungus can be transmitted from bat to bat, cave to bat, and even cave to cave as people inadvertently carry the fungus on shoes, clothing, or equipment. Since many bats hibernate in the same caves over the winter, the fungus can decimate an entire bat colony once established.

#### How to help:

- Turn off unnecessary lights - Light pollution can disrupt or deter bats.
- Join the WI Bat Program for more info please visit: <http://wiatri.net/inventory/Bats/>
- Plant a garden - Creating a garden will help attract insects that help pollinate plants and feed bats. Use native plants whenever possible.
- Install a bat box - Provide shelter for bats and get free bug control!
- When visiting caves, do not transport items that have been underground including clothes, shoes, lights, and cameras -- even if they have been washed. Wisconsin tourist caves and mines have measures in place to protect their site from the possibility of human assisted transfer of the WNS fungus.



*Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin DNR.*

Make sure to check us out on Facebook on the Door County Invasive Species (DCIST) page and at our website <https://doorinvasives.org> for events, news, and more!

## Native Species Highlights

### Wisconsin Native Species Spooky edition!

Door County is home to many beautiful native plants. Below are a few species that you might see in Door County as you get out and enjoy the crisp fall air. These species highlight the importance of maintaining our native ecology. While you are outside enjoying the natural areas in Door County, help halt invasive species by reporting any populations on the GLEDN app and as always try to landscape with native species!

**Witch grass/witch's hair** (*Panicum capillare*): This annual grass has hairy stems and hairless leaves that can be up to 10" long. The explosive seed heads appear in late summer to early fall lasting about two weeks, then detach from the plant and roll across the ground like a tumble weed. The seed heads with their wild nature earns this plant its common name witches hair/witch grass.



Photo on the left curtesy of Sam C. Strickland  
Photo on the right curtesy of Frank Richards.



**Dolls eyes** (*Actea pachypoda*): This peculiar plant earns its common name for the unusual eyeball-like fruit it bears. Another common name for this plant is white baneberry. This plant is found in upland woodlands.

**New England Aster** (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*): Is a beautiful aster with pink to purple petals and a yellow center. The plant was included in our Halloween edition because what is more terrifying than a plant who reminds us of the New England Patriots and the Minnesota Vikings during football season? The genus name comes from the Greek *symph* meaning "coming together" and *trich* meaning "hair," in possible reference to the flower structure.



Photo curtesy of Illinois Wildflowers.



**Witch Hazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*): This shrub is not named after witches, rather it comes from the middle English word wych or Wyche, meaning flexible, in reference to the plants flexible branches. Common witch hazel blooms in October/November. There are a few spring-flowering witch hazels that start blooming in February/March.

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 November 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.

## Local Highlights

### Stewarding the Land

About eight years ago Phil Berndt noticed an unknown unusually bright chartreuse bloom near his driveway. Thinking it was probably a wildflower, he left it and let it go to seed. The plants quickly spread, filling his front field, and before he knew it, there were thousands of plants blooming across acres of his property and the surrounding properties. The plant was wild parsnip.

Over the next few years, armed with a shovel and lots of determination, he went to work removing the plants through shovel cutting every flowering plant he could before they went to seed. Wild parsnip is a biennial, meaning it lives two years. During the 1<sup>st</sup> year wild parsnip produces basal leaves (leaves close to the ground), during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year the plant produces flower heads and seeds. These early years of control, Phil spent as much time as he could removing every 2nd year plant prior to them going to seed. Starting last year, he noticed he was ahead of the blooms and could focus time and energy on 1st year plants.

“I know there are sure to be a few seeds banked out there, but I'm so close to having them gone that I can hardly stand it. It has been a funny love/hate experience because the smell of the freshly pulled roots bring back wonderful memories of my Big Grandma and I can hardly get enough of the smell. That said, I will NOT miss the backbreaking effort that went into removing them.” Phil has also challenged his neighbor to help spread the awareness about the issues and impact wild parsnip has within his community.



## Invasive Species Workshops and Volunteer Opportunities

### Bat Week!

October 24<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>

Bat Week is an international, annual celebration designed to raise awareness about the need for bat conservation. Bats are amazing creatures that are vital to the health of our natural world and economy. Although we may not always see them, bats are hard at work all around the world each night - eating tons of insects, pollinating flowers, and spreading seeds that grow new plants and trees.

For more information visit: <https://batweek.org/>



### Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC)

November 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>

This Conference will be held as a webinar platform. The Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference (UMISC) is a biennial conference that addresses all taxa of invasive species. In 2020, UMISC will celebrate 12 years of connecting the invasive species management, research, and policy community. The goal of UMISC is to strengthen management of invasive species, especially prevention, control, and containment. There have been great strides in invasive species research, prevention, and management, but much work still must be done. The conference provides numerous opportunities to network with professionals, land managers, researchers, nonprofits, and others. For more information visit:

[www.umisc.net](http://www.umisc.net)



Make sure to check us out on Facebook on the Door County Invasive Species (DCIST) page and at our website

<https://doorinvasives.org> for events, news, and more!

## Seeing Stars?

### Invasive Species Profile: Starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtuse*) An invader of Door County

Starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtuse*), native to Europe and Asia, is a submerged aquatic macrophyte (algae) known for growing in dense mats. A relatively new invader, it was first found in the Great Lakes in 1983 and starting in 2006 starry stonewort rapidly expanded across inland lakes in Michigan. In many infested lakes, this alga impedes navigation, limits growth of beneficial plants, and covers valuable fish habitat and spawning areas. Inland lakes infested with starry stonewort often develop very clear water as it prevents the re-suspension of particulate matter in the water column. Starry stonewort was first recorded in Door County in 2016 in Lake Michigan. No populations of starry stonewort have been documented in any of Door County's inland lakes.

Starry stonewort is similar in appearance to a native species known as *Chara*. It has tiny, star-shaped, tan-colored reproductive structures called "bulbils" that are firm to the touch when compared to its soft branches. The presence of bulbils is one way to distinguish between starry stonewort from *Chara*. Starry stonewort has whorls (leaves that encircle the stem) of 4-6 long branchlets, with blunt tips. It is more robust than most members of its family and can grow to over 6.5 feet tall. Starry stonewort's branches look and feel gelatinous, unlike *Chara*, which feels brittle and scaly. It typically grows in alkaline lakes with marl sediments, up to 30 feet deep.

Starry stonewort is typically an annual but can behave as a perennial during mild winters. Because it lacks roots, it can be dislodged from the bottom without much difficulty. However, manual removal of starry stonewort is difficult and probably impractical on a large scale. Abundant bulbils on the rhizoids can dislodge if disturbed and will sprout new individuals. Starry stonewort can also regrow from pieces of plants that are chopped off but not harvested. Manual removal efforts must emphasize careful removal of these bulbils and plant parts. Chemical treatments have been used with mixed success but could also pose problems for other aquatic life. To prevent the spread of starry stonewort from Lake Michigan to inland lakes make sure to **INSPECT** your boat, trailer and equipment, **REMOVE** any attached aquatic plants or animals, **DRAIN** all water from boats, motors and all equipment, and **NEVER MOVE** live fish away from a waterbody. For more information on starry stonewort please visit: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/StarryStonewort.html>

In Wisconsin, starry stonewort is listed as a prohibited species under Wisconsin's Invasive Species Rule Chapter NR 40. Prohibited species are those that are not yet present in the state or only in a few places, are likely to cause environmental and/or economic harm, and could be feasibly eradicated. The NR 40 Rule makes it illegal to transport, possess, transfer, or introduce without a permit. **If you find starry stonewort in Door County, be sure to report it to DCIST or using the GLEDN app!**



Photo of a "bulbil" found at the Sister Bay Marina



Photo of a mat of starry stonewort. Photo courtesy of MN DNR.



Photo of an underwater mat of starry stonewort. Photo courtesy of Paul Skawinski.

Make sure to check us out on Facebook on the Door County Invasive Species (DCIST) page and at our website <https://doorinvasives.org> for events, news, and more!