



The Door County Invasive Species Team

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

New Unexpected Invaders!

Unexpected Hitchhikers

Earlier this year a Door County resident reached out to the Door County Invasive Species Team with a question, “What should I do with a lizard that hitchhiked on some plants I bought at a home improvement store?” The answer, “Do not release it!” The lizard, which was identified as a brown anole, would not have made it through a Wisconsin winter and probably would have been eaten by a bird of prey, cat or another predator prior to the onset of winter. However, there was a chance the lizard could have been harboring a zoonotic pathogen that could have impacted closely related species, such as other cold-blooded animals, or impacted another unrelated species.



Photo taken by Sam Koyen.

This story is not unique. 2021 has been a year with multiple reports of escaped parakeets, parrots, lizards, invasive worms, problematic plants, and early detection species. It seems each week DCIST had another species to focus on. With each new species, there was a unifying effort that people could take to protect Door County’s ecology - prevention. Invasive species can spread through multiple pathways including: hitching rides on equipment to new areas (spotted lantern fly egg sacs being attached to vehicles, seeds stuck on shoes and pet fur, etc.), hitching rides in water containers (zebra mussels and quagga mussels’ larvae in coolers and boat props), hitching rides in firewood (emerald ash borer), and getting a free ride as a pet or ornamental plant (yellow iris, bishops weed). Although not glorious, prevention is relatively simple and helps address the pathways new invaders use: 1) inspect all equipment and furry friends 2) clean all debris off equipment and furry friends 3) Don't move anything with suspected invasive species keep it on site 4) Plant only native plants and use locally sourced materials 5) Properly dispose of material contaminated with invasives (landfill and/or solarize and landfill) 6) Stay on hiking trails 7) if possible control invaders.

It is not the end of the world if you have an invasive. Depending on the species, in this example the lizard, there are multiple partners who are willing to take unwanted exotic pets or found friends and rehome them to an appropriate living situation such as a zoo, outdoor education center, aquarium, etc. These partners include J&R aquatic Animal Rescue and the Humane Society. This is what happened to our lizard, he was adopted to a home who was happy to add to their lizard family. For other species such as jumping worm or invasive plants, DCIST is happy to provide information on how to prevent spreading these invaders and if there are any control options.

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!

New Unexpected Invaders!

Jumping Worm!

With Labor Day marking the unofficial end of summer and leaves beginning to change, many people are thinking about fall clean up and dividing their perennial plants. Around this time, gardeners share plants and haul yard waste to composting sites to feed future plants. These routine fall activities present a potential risk to your backyard; they can be the source of invasive pests and diseases, such as jumping worms.

Jumping worms are a relatively new invasive species, first identified in Wisconsin in 2013. Jumping worms are comprised of 4 different species and are vastly different than the European earthworms that have been in the US for hundreds of years. Jumping worms are much more destructive and live only in the top 6-8 inches of soil. They have earned their common name based on their jumpy, sporadic movements. Their energetic behavior also leads to a voracious appetite, resulting in negative impacts to soil structure, and loss of shallow rooted and seedling plants, which leads to decreasing biodiversity and increasing erosion rates.

Jumping worms are annual parthenogenetic worms, meaning they only live one year and can produce eggs without a mate. A single worm can mature and begin shedding cocoons within 60 days of hatching. These cocoons remain in the soil until the following spring, giving life to the next generation. Cocoons are very small, approximately the size of a mustard seed, and often go undetected. They can only be killed if heated above 104 degrees. Jumping worms live in colonies and spread quickly. It has been documented that jumping worms can infest up to 17 acres in one season, unlike the European earthworms, which move approximately 30 feet a year.

All of these characteristics make them problematic. They can easily be shared through the movement of soil and plant matter and are highly destructive to the shallow topsoils and corresponding ecosystems that make Door County unique. These aren't the only invasive species potentially hidden in displaced earth; other invasive plant seeds and pathogens are often shared through soil movement.

Some studies have found the deep-rooted qualities of native prairie plants can inhibit the movement of jumping worms, and that species of plants that have saponins, such as alfalfa and horse chestnut, inhibit the ability of jumping worms to live in specific sites. Unfortunately, there is little known about the best control practices for jumping worms, so the best way to steward our lands and waters is through prevention. When asked about the potential impacts of jumping worms to Door County, Door County Land Trust director of land stewardship, Jesse Koyen stated, "Jumping worms pose a huge threat to Door County's ecology because of their detrimental long term impacts to soil and native vegetation. Just about any landscape you can imagine is susceptible to jumping worms: backyard gardens, open fields, forests and other natural areas. Prevention is our best solution."

Prevention of invasive species include simple steps, such as not moving any soil or plant matter where there are known invasive species; cleaning all equipment when moving between sites (ie. shoe treads, debris from pets, shovels, etc.); using only bare root and native plants from reputable sources; not moving invasive animals and/or plants; and always taking the time to inspect all equipment and furry friends for any potential hitchhikers prior to departing from a site. All of these simple steps can help prevent the spread of invasive species, and protect Door County's natural areas through private property stewardship.

If you suspect you have jumping worms on your property use these simple prevention steps to avoid introducing them to new areas. Do not share plants, soil, compost material from the suspected site and clean all equipment prior to using equipment at new sites. Reach out to the Door County Invasive Species Team, at DCIST1@gmail.com and/or the Wisconsin DNR, invasive.species@wisconsin.gov, to report new populations or to learn more about jumping worms.



Photo taken by Marie Johnston.

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Invasive Species Workshops and Volunteer Opportunities



Washington Island Forum 2050

September 23 7-8pm

The Door County Land Trust (DCLT) Land Stewardship Director, DCLT Community Conservation Director, and the DCIST Coordinator will be presenting at the Trueblood Performing Arts Center on Washington Island discussing long term goals and current perspectives on Land and Lake stewardship as it pertains to Washington Island. This event will take place outside unless poor weather, then inside.

For more information:

<https://www.tpacwashingtonisland.com/>

Curious Citizen: Is That a Pine or a Spruce?

September 24 9:30am-12:00pm

Do you have trouble telling one conifer from another? Here's a chance to learn 10 different conifer trees. At the end of our hike, you will be able to distinguish white from black spruce, hemlock from balsam, red from white pine, fir from spruce and more. We'll head out to find and ID various conifer species on the trails of the Ridges Sanctuary. The hike will be a leisurely 2 miles. Hand lenses will be supplied or bring your own. Wear shoes appropriate for hiking.

Meet at The Cabins at The Ridges, 8288 County Q, Baileys Harbor.

For more information:

<https://www.ridgessanctuary.org/event/curious-citizen-is-that-a-pine-or-a-spruce/>



Habitat Healers at Crossroad at Big Creek

September 25 9:30-1:30

Volunteers of all ages are invited to help with Crossroads land restoration efforts. Instruction will be given. Equipment and gloves provided along with cookies and lemonade. Please wear clothing that can get dirty and wet and appropriate footwear. Meet at the Workshop/Nursery just beyond the Main Campus parking lot at 2041 Michigan St., Sturgeon Bay.

For more information:

<https://crossroadsatbigcreek.org/event/habitat-healers-40/>



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 for more information or learn how to download and use the app at <https://fyi.uwex.edu/wifdn/>.

Keep an eye out for our October 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.

Invasive Species Workshops and Volunteer Opportunities

Darrel Morrison "Beauty of the Wild" Presentation, Reception and Book Signing September 30, 6:30-8pm



Darrel Morrison is a renowned landscape architect and educator whose ecology-based approach to design has influenced generations of students and practitioners.

Darrel created designs for the UW-Madison Arboretum, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, among other places throughout the country. He has been a long-time instructor at The Clearing in Ellison Bay.

Follow-up event: Darrel Morrison's work has influenced landscapes as close to home as Crossroads at Big Creek. Please join us for Restoration at Crossroads: Re-Meandering and More on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. at the Collins Learning Center, 2041 Michigan St, Sturgeon Bay.

For more information:

<https://crossroadsatbigcreek.org/event/darrel-morrison-lecture/>

The Ridges Night Hike on the Boardwalk!

October 1, 7:30-9:30pm

Owls, bats, and Range Lights, oh my! Come explore The Ridges at night! We will learn about the creatures that become active after the sun goes down and check out The Range Lights at work as a navigational aid. (Please, no flashlights, light up shoes, etc. as we want our eyes to adjust to the dark and to be able to see just as the animals do at night).

For more information: <https://www.ridgessanctuary.org/event/night-hike-on-the-boardwalk-2/2021-10-01/>



Habitattitude Exotic Pet Surrender Event - La Crosse

October 2, 12pm



Do you have an exotic pet that you are no longer able to care for? If so, bring your pet to the Habitattitude Exotic Pet Surrender Event on October 2nd between 12 PM and 3 PM at the Humane Society of Douglas County Building at 138 Moccasin Mike Rd, Superior, WI 54880. Area organizations will be accepting fish, invertebrates, reptiles, pet birds, small mammals, and plants - no questions asked.

For More Information Contact JOHN P MOYLES at 1(920) 419-8839 or adoptions@jraar.org

Register Here:

https://www.facebook.com/events/127051575976500/?acontext=%7B%22event_action_history%22%3A%7B%22surface%22%3A%22page%22%7D%7D

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Native Species Highlights

Wisconsin Native Flower 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!

Closed Bottle Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*): This flowering plant blooms from August through October. Flowers appear to be inflated air sacs that range in color from purple to white. Only strong pollinators, such as bumble bees, can force the flower open to get at the nectar and deposit pollen, earning this plant its common name.



Photo on the left taken by Mark Mittelstadt. Photo on the right taken by Emmett J. Judziwicz.



Photo taken by C. Peirce.

Stiff-leaved Godlenrod (*Solidago rigida*): This beautiful late blooming flower has light green and pubescent leaves (like the skin of a peach) and has a flat top of vibrant yellow flowers. This plant earned its common name for having leaves and stems that “stiffen” up throughout the year.

Heath Aster (*Symphyotrichum ericoides*): This late blooming aster can be white, light blue, or pale pink with a yellow center. The genus name comes from the Greek *symph* meaning “coming together” and *trich* meaning “hair,” in possible reference to the flower structure. This plant resembles heather with its woody-like stems, narrow short leaves, and spikes of flowers; giving this plant its species name (*erica* meaning heather) and common name, heath aster.



Photo on the right taken by Terry Glase. Photo on the left taken by Marvin G. Bloomquist.



Button blazingstar/rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*): This pink/purple flower creates vibrant spikes of color. The Latin name *aspera* translates to “rough.” The clustered flower heads earn this plant its other common name, button blazing star due to the cluster resembling buttons. As with many *Liatris* species, it is a favorite amongst butterflies for its nectar.

Photo on the right taken by W.D. and Dolphia Bransford. Photo on the left curtesy of Julie Makin.

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Let's make Common Reed less Common!

Invasive Species Profile: Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) An invader of Door County

Phragmites or common reed is a perennial aggressive wetland grass that outcompetes native plants and displaces native animals. The presence of large stands can even change the hydrology of an area. Due to its height and its distinctive, fluffy seed heads, Phragmites is easy to spot, even by traveling motorists. Phragmites has spread throughout Door County along right-of-ways, in wetlands, and along shorelines. This is one of the four species Door County has historically focused monitoring, control, and outreach efforts.

Phragmites is thought to be originally native to the Middle East and has since spread its native range now to Europe. Believed to be originally introduced as an ornamental plant to the United States, it now is found in all the lower 48 states and is considered to have a world-wide distribution.

There are a handful of species that look like Phragmites, this includes native Phragmites and several species of ornamental grasses. Native Phragmites (*Phragmites australis* ssp. *americanus*) has smooth, flexible stems, often with shiny, round, black spots (a fungus). Its inflorescence is usually sparser than non-native Phragmites, as are most patches where it grows.

There are both manual and chemical control options available for Phragmites with various levels of success. Mechanical methods include cutting stems below the water's surface, mowing or burning various populations. Mechanical control has proven to have limited success and often are used to limit the spread of established populations and not eradicate populations. Chemical control options consist of foliar spray of herbicide applied to bundled and cut stems in late summer-fall. Subsequent follow up treatments are almost always needed. *Phragmites australis* often is found in and along waterways which may require an aquatic permit and certified applicator to apply herbicide. For more information on various control options please see the NRCS USDA Phragmites factsheet at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1081651.pdf

Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is 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 Phragmites in Door County, be sure to report it to DCIST or using the GLEDN app!**



SWCD LTEs surveying phragmites stand



Phragmites stand growing in standing water.



Phragmites seed heads.



The Door County Invasive Species Team – Samantha Koyen, Coordinator

DCIST Message Line: 920-746-5955; Email: dcist1@gmail.com

Check out our new website at <https://doorinvasives.org>