

# Invasive Species

By David Mow, Invasive Species Specialist

Are you aware that Indiana has an invasive species problem? You may wonder what makes something an invasive species? There are two requirements for something to be listed as invasive. The first requirement is that it is not from North America and the second is that it causes some form of harm. The harm could be to health, the environment, or to the economy.

Invasive species can be found in all 5 categories of life on earth. These five categories are animal, plant, fungi, protist, and Monera.

In Morgan County we have several of these including fish (Asian Carp), mussels (Zebra), insects (Emerald Ash Borer), fungi (Dutch Elm Disease) and plants (there are currently 128 different plant species listed for Indiana).

Morgan County Native & Invasive Plant Partnership (MC NIPP) is a group that is working on educating the public about this problem in our area. If you would like more information about any invasive species, you can reach the group at

invasivesmorgancounty@gmail.com or join us at a monthly meeting at the Morgan County Administration Building located at 180 South Main Street, Martinsville, IN, 46151. The group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm. Please visit [www.morgancountyswcd.org](http://www.morgancountyswcd.org) for up-to-date meeting information and topics that are discussed.

The MC NIPP group also conducts Weed Wrangles® around the county. These are state-wide sponsored events to help remove invasive species from public spaces. In the spring, the focus is on highly invasive Garlic Mustard plants. It is easy to pull by hand and if done every year, until the seed bank is used up, it can be removed without the use of chemicals. Removing it before it can flower and produce the seeds is the key. Those seeds can stay viable in the soil for 8-10 years.

In the summer and fall MC NIPP works on invasive shrubs. Using a cut-stump method, members treat the freshly cut stump of an invasive shrub with an herbicide to destroy it. They have

reduced Burning Bush, Autumn Olive, Bush Honeysuckle, Multiflora Rose and Wintercreeper in several parks, nature preserves and state forests. MC NIPP holds Weed Wrangles® several times a year and the public is invited to help. You can learn how the different species are removed and controlled. Because different plants have different life cycles they are controlled differently and in different seasons. There are many options for treatment and choosing the right one is important for success.

This group along with the Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District provides a free service to the community. They conduct an Invasive Species Property Survey with the landowner for free. They will learn what invasive plants they have on their property and receive a report afterwards that will give them information on the best method of control for each species they have. You can schedule this by reaching out to the email above or calling 765-349-2060.

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