

about this guide

This identification guide highlights invasive plants of natural areas within the Leech Lake Reservation borders. Invasive plants are species that are not native and cause or have the potential to cause harm to the environment, economy, or human health. Not all species introduced from other places are harmful. The term "invasive" is reserved for the most aggressive plants species that grow and reproduce rapidly, causing major detrimental impacts in the places where they become established.

Invasive plants can have a wide variety of negative impacts on native species and ecosystems including:

- Displacing native species and reducing biodiversity
- Degrading wildlife habitat
- Reducing crop yields and increasing agricultural production costs
- Changing the ways our ecosystems work by altering fire frequency or nutrient, water, or light availability

What can you do?

- Learn to identify native and invasive plants in your area
- Don't plant invasive species and remove any you find on your land
- Avoid transporting invasive species by cleaning your clothes, boots, gear, vehicle and pets after traveling through infested areas

Invasive Species

Plants and species of the Leech Lake Reservation.

A guide to problematic non-native species.

land species



Photo: Carol Mortensen

Spotted Knapweed
Centaurea stoebe
Flower: Purple (can be white), June-Oct, thistle-like
Leaves: Basal/alt. hairy, gray-green-blue narrowing as they ascend, at base may be 8" getting smaller to approx. 2"
Habitat: Sunny, dry fields, waste areas
Height: 2-3'



Photo: Rob Routledge

Garlic Mustard
Alliaria petiolata
Flower: White, May-June, 4 petals
Leaves: 1st year - small kidney rosettes of 3 to 4 leaves, 2nd yr - 3" long & wide, heart shaped leaves, irregular teeth. Onion or garlic smell when crushed.
Seed pods: 1-2½" long
Habitat: Upland Hardwood or Floodplains
Height: 1-4'



Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Division of Resource Management

land species



Celandine

Chelidonium majus
Flower: Yellow, May-August,
4 petals, 3-8 stalked at the
end of stem
Leaves: Alt. compound
groups of 5-9, up to 8" long
and 3" wide becoming
smaller as they ascend, long
white hairs at base
Habitat: Part shade, woods,
waste areas
Height: 12-30"

Photo: Katy
Chayka



Siberian Pea-Shrub

Caragana arborescens
Flower: Yellow, May-June,
1-5 long-stalked, bundled in
leaf axils, pea shaped
Leaves: Multiple coming
from base, compound 8-12
leaflets, lack terminal leaflet
Seed Pods: 1-2" bean-like
pod ripens green to yellow to
brown
Habitat: Part shade, forest
edges, open woods, planted
for privacy and windbreak
Height: 6-18'

Photo: Peter
Dziuk

land species



Buckthorn

Frangula alnus and
Rhamnus carthartica
Flower: Too inconspicuous
to observe with the naked eye
Leaves: mostly opposite
(occasionally alt.), simple,
generally egg shaped, 1-3"
long and ¾-1½" wide
Habitat: Shade, sun, moist to
dry woods
Height: Up to 20'

Photo: Katy
Chayka



Wild Parsnip

Pastinaca sativa
Flower: Yellow in flat
clusters 3-8" across at end
of branching stems, tiny 5
petals that curl under,
June-July
Leaves: Compound with 5
to 15 leaflets, up to 18"L by
6"W, smaller fewer leaflets
as they ascend, coarsely
toothed, hairless
Habitat: Sun, roadsides,
open fields, wet meadows
Height: 2-5'

Photo: Katy
Chayka

land species



Leafy Spurge

Euphorbia virgata
Flower: Flat to round cluster
at top of stem, a pair of ¼"
round to heart-shaped, green
to yellow bracts, look like
petals, May-Sept
Leaves: Leaves are alt, 1-3"
long, lance-linear, pointed at
tip, toothless, hairless,
stalkless
Habitat: Sun; fields, along
roads, disturbed soil
Height: 1-2'

Photo: Peter
Dziuk



Morrow's Honeysuckle

Lonicera morrowii
Flower: Irregular flowers
arising from leaf axils of 1st
year branches, white, ¾-1",
with slender tube & 2 lips,
upper lip with 4 lobes
spreading with age, May-
June
Leaves: opposite, 1-2" long,
½-1" wide, narrowly
egg-shaped to oblong-elliptic
Habitat: Sun, disturbed soil,
forest, woodland edges,
thickets
Height: 5-12'

Photo: Peter
Dziuk

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Shop

land species



Photo: Tom Heutte

Reed Canary Grass
Phalaris arundinacea
"One of the most destructive Wetland species."
Flower: Branching cluster around 8" or less. Pyramidal.
Main Branches 3½", 3 or more per branch. Purple tinge spikelets
Leaves: Alternate, evenly spaced 4-12" long, collapsing in the fall to form a dense spreading mat
Height: 2-5'

aquatic species



Photo: Amy Benson

Zebra Mussel
Dreissena polymorpha
Dark and white (zebra-like) pattern on shells, less than 2"
Habitat: Lakes, attaches to all surface types

aquatic species



Photo: Carol Mortensen

Purple Loosestrife
Lythrum salicaria
Flower: Spike 20"L, purple-pinkish densely packed, 5-7 petals, tissue paper like
Leaves: Opposite 4"L by 1"W or whorls of 3-4, stem is square and hairy
Habitat: Sun, moist soil, along shores
Height: 2-6'



Photo: Chris Evans

Eurasian Watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum
Flower: Pink flower spike 4" with tiny yellow flowers
Leaves: Green, stems are often white-reddish, color variable, 12-21 leaflet pairs,
Habitat: Lakes
Height: Up to 20', typically 9', forms dense mat
*can hybridize

aquatic species



Photo: Minnesota DNR

Faucet Snail
Bithynia tentaculata
Light brown to black with 4-5 coils (whorls) in the shell, rings around 'foot' resemble a bullseye, toxic to waterfowl
300 eggs for each female, hatch 3 weeks - 3 months depending on water temperature



Photo: Minnesota DNR

Starry Stonewort
Nitellopsis obtusa
Flower: White star-shaped bulbil form on clear threads, also has orange spheres
Leaves: Bright green branches, variable in length, whorled
Habitat: Lakes typically no deeper than 15' deep
Height: Forms dense mats that appear to be floating

..... aquatic species



Spiny Water Flea
Bythotrephes longimanus
Zooplankton 1/4"-5/8"
long, opaque in color,
Out-compete native
zooplankton, native fish
cannot eat them due to
long spine tails

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Photo: Gary
Montz

..... insect species



Earthworms
All species
Size, color, feeding behavior,
burrowing behavior and
habitat vary with species
Not identifiable until they
reach adult stage
Destroy hardwood forest
habitat

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Photo: Joseph
Berger

..... insect species



Emerald Ash Borer
Agrilus planipennis
Eggs: light-yellow, turning
brown-yellow. Adults
emerge in June leave "D"
hole
Adult: Bright metallic grn
jewel beetle, .3"L by
.06"W, bright red upper
abdoman, infestation fatal
to tree. Ash trees exclusively
Trees die 1-3 years into
infestation

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Photo: Debbie
Miller



Gypsy Moth
Lymantria dispar dispar
Catterpillar: 5 pairs of blue
dots & 6 pairs of red dots.
1.5" long. Egg masses:
Aug-Sept, Caterpillars:
June-July, Pupae: July,
Moths: August
Female: White wings tan
body 1.5" long,
Male: Dark brown with
feathery antennae.
Habitat: Hardwood trees,
will put egg sacs anywhere

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Photo: Jon
Yuschock

for more information

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This guide was produced by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Division of Resource Management in collaboration with Leech Lake Public Relations. The purpose of this pamphlet is to reduce the impact of invasive plant species and insects in our area. We are working to facilitate collaboration and information exchange, educate the public about invasive plants, prevent new invasions, support early detection and rapid response, and promote research on invasive plants and insects. For more information please visit our web page at www.llojibwe.org/drm

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