

Spotlight on Sustainability

May 2019

Provided by Your Ontario County Eco-Heroes



“Nature is ever at work building and pulling down, creating and destroying, keeping everything whirling and flowing...”

-- John Muir

Invasive Species

The Earth was once a ball of magma spinning along; its surface marked by waves and eddies just like the seas of today. Eventually, the crust formed and a large land mass poked out from beneath the water which supported life. Plants and animals species eventually established themselves in specific regions of the world based on natural resources, and continue to thrive today.

However, as you can imagine, over time different species of plants and animals ended up being introduced to habitats and regions they are not considered native to, either via direct or indirect efforts. These species are what we consider Invasive Species. Species that are non-native and can cause harm to the environment, the economy, or human health by way of habitat degradation and loss, loss of native plant and animal species, loss of income, diseases in humans and livestock and risk to public safety.

(<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html>)

There are many non-native species, such as dandelions and honey bees, which are not seen as a threat and have not disrupted the natives to a great extent, but unfortunately today, this region is beset by numerous invasive species. Given the long list here are 3 with a bit more detail.

1. Giant Hogweed looks very similar to Queen Anne's Lace, but instead this species can cause painful burns if you come in contact with it. (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/39809.html>)
2. The ash borer is a jewel beetle native to north-eastern Asia that has killed tens of millions of ash trees in our area. (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>)
3. Finally, the newly arrived plum pox virus is fatal to many stone fruit species, such as peaches, apricots, nectarines and cherries. According to Finger Lakes PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management), these critters are causing stress or outright devastation on native life. (http://nyis.info/invasive_species/plum-pox-virus/)

To see a full list of invasive species to the Finger Lakes region and to learn more about what you can do please check out these sites: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/265.html/> <http://fingerlakesinvasives.org/priority-invasives/>

Rain Gardens

A rain garden is a garden that has native shrubs perennials, and flowers planted in a small depression, usually found on a natural slope. They are designed to temporarily hold and soak up rain water runoff that flows from roofs, driveways, patios, or lawns.

Why is rainwater runoff a problem?

Runoff is rainwater that has hit an impermeable surface, such as a roof, driveway, parking lot, etc. As runoff flows over these surfaces it collects pollutants such as particles of dirt, fertilizer, chemicals, oil, garbage, and bacteria. Typically this water flows untreated straight into our storm drains ultimately ending up in our nearby streams and other waterways.

Rain gardens act as a line of defense for our waterways by collecting the runoff before it reaches the storm drain. The vegetation and soil in rain gardens filter out some of the contaminants then is either absorbed into the soil naturally or continues on its way to the storm drain.

What type of plants should be in a rain garden?

Native plants are best. They have better root systems, often do not require fertilizers, and are better at utilizing water and nutrients found in native soils.

To learn more about rain gardens and their benefits to the community and how to build your own at home please visit:

<https://www.groundwater.org/action/home/raingardens-more.html>



Looking for a volunteer opportunity?!

As part of the Ontario County Upward initiative, the County continues to seek opportunities to give back to the community and be stewards of our environment. This year the County kicked off an Adopt-A-Highway program to clean up stretches of county-owned highway. As a part of this program, we are dedicating a stretch of highway to be taken care of by employees of Ontario County.

We're hoping you're interested in joining us!

When: Saturday May 18th

Time: 9am to 11am

Meeting Location: Meet at 3010 parking lot

Clean-up Location: Co. 46 between Co. 10 & Freshour Rd.

Volunteers must be 12 years of age or older to participate. All participants will be required to sign a release (to be provided day of) form the day of the event.

For more information on the Adopt-A-Highway program and to find the Rules of the Road for the event please visit: <http://www.co.ontario.ny.us/1642/Adopt-A-Highway-Program>.

If you know you are interested in participating please contact Regina Sousa @ regina.sousa@co.ontario.ny.us or ext.

4453.