

Invasive Forest Plants Impacting RI

Invasive Plants Degrade RI Forests

Rhode Island's forests face mounting pressure from development, fragmentation, climate stress, and invasive species. With over 6,000 miles of roads fragmenting the landscape, invasive plants have access to our remaining core forests. They inhibit forest regeneration, degrade ecosystem health, and reduce resilience — the ability of forests to withstand drought, pests, and storms.

Species discussed at this workshop

Japanese Barberry

Berberis thunbergii — Thorny shrub smothering understory; linked to significantly higher Lyme disease risk.

Japanese Stiltgrass

Microstegium vimineum — Annual grass carpeting forest floors, suppressing regeneration, altering soil chemistry.

Glossy Buckthorn

Frangula alnus — Invades wetland edges and moist forests; bird-spread berries accelerate colonization.

Invasive Honeysuckles

Lonicera spp. — Extended growing season shades out natives; berry production fuels rapid wildlife dispersal.

Burning Bush

Euonymus alatus — Common ornamental escaping into forests, displacing native shrubs critical for wildlife.

Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata — Releases chemicals toxic to mycorrhizal fungi that native trees depend on.

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus — Climbing vine that girdles and kills trees, opening canopy to further invasion.

DATE:

Thursday, November 5, 2026

Location:

Rocky Hill Grange

1340 South County Trail, East Greenwich

Time:

4:30 sign-in and light meal

5:00-7:30 presentations and questions

