



Legislation Text

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**File #: 2015-0186, Version: 1**

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**EXPRESS CITY COUNCIL INTENT TO DEVELOP INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES POLICY**

A RESOLUTION TO EXPRESS THE CITY COUNCIL'S INTENT TO DEVELOP POLICIES OR ORDINANCES TO DISCOURAGE THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

**WHEREAS**, invasive plant species are harmful to our local ecosystem because they tend to spread rapidly and crowd out or kill native plants; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Fayetteville Parks and Recreation Department already has an invasive plant species eradication program and currently works with volunteer groups to eradicate invasive plant species in City Parks; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Fayetteville should encourage the sale and planting of appropriate native vegetation as an alternative to invasive plant species city-wide; and

**WHEREAS**, a city-wide invasive plant species ordinance could include several components such as public education plans for identification and eradication of invasive plant species, development of an integrated pest management component related to the control or eradication of invasive plant species, creation of a list of appropriate non-invasive and native plants that are appropriate alternatives; and adoption of ordinances that reduce or eliminate the local installation of identified invasive plant species; and

**WHEREAS**, the process for creating policies or ordinances should include robust input from horticulturists, commercial nurseries, community organizations, City staff and citizens before any policies or ordinances are adopted or enacted.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS:**

Section 1: That the City Council of the City of Fayetteville, Arkansas hereby expresses its intent to develop and adopt appropriate policies or ordinances to attempt to eradicate or discourage the spread of invasive plant species and restore non-invasive and native plants within the City of Fayetteville.

**City of Fayetteville Staff Review Form**

**2015-0186**

**Legistar File ID**

**5/5/2015**

City Council Meeting Date - Agenda Item Only  
N/A for Non-Agenda Item

Leif Olson

4/14/2015

Sustainability & Resilience /  
Chief of Staff

**Submitted By**

**Submitted Date**

**Division / Department**

**Action Recommendation:**

Staff requests that the City Council determine whether to study and develop an invasive plant species policy and/or ordinance.

**Budget Impact:**

<hr/>		<hr/>	
Account Number		Fund	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Project Number		Project Title	
<b>Budgeted Item?</b>	NA	Current Budget	\$ -
		Funds Obligated	\$ -
		Current Balance	\$ -
<b>Does item have a cost?</b>	NA	Item Cost	
<b>Budget Adjustment Attached?</b>	NA	Budget Adjustment	
		Remaining Budget	\$ -

V20140710

Previous Ordinance or Resolution # 

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Original Contract Number: 

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Approval Date: 

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Comments:

**MEETING OF MAY 5, 2015**

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THRU:** Don Marr, Chief of Staff  
Peter Nierengarten, Sustainability and Resilience Department Director

**FROM:** Leif Olson, Associate Planner

**DATE:** April 14, 2015

**SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of Developing an Invasive Plant Species Policy and/or Ordinance**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff requests that the City Council determine whether to study and develop an invasive plant species policy and/or ordinance.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Urban Forestry Advisory Board (UFAB) has been actively discussing the subject of invasive plant species with the Urban Forestry Division and the Parks and Recreation Department staff for several years. The Urban Forestry Advisory Board has also made two (2) annual presentations to the City Council at agenda session requesting that the City Council consider the development of an Invasive Plant Species Policy and/or Ordinance. In January of 2015, the UFAB board approved a motion to have the Urban Forestry Advisory Board Chair to discuss the development of an invasive plant species ordinance with City Council Members and the City Attorney's Office.

Invasive Species Policy has also been discussed between the City Attorney and City staff of the Sustainability and Resilience Department, who at the advice of the Mayor are bringing forward a resolution to the City Council to express whether or not there is consensus and agreement to work with other City Departments and Divisions to develop an invasive plant species policy and/or ordinance.

Invasive plant species ordinances from peer cities have typically contain the following components:

- Public education plans or campaigns centered on the identification and eradication of invasive plants on public and private property,
- Development of programs and/or materials explaining effective methods for eradicating a variety of different invasive plants,
- Development of an integrated pest management component related to the control and/or eradication of invasive species,
- Adoption of policies that ban the local sale and/or installation of identified invasive plant species, and
- The creation of a list of appropriate non-invasive and native plants that are appropriate alternatives for the identified and banned invasive plants.

**BUDGET/STAFF IMPACT:**

Staff anticipates the process of developing an invasive species policy to take several months. This process will include a robust stakeholder input process including City Staff, horticulturists, commercial nurseries and community organizations. Before this work is conducted, the Mayor wants to determine if a majority of the City Council supports studying and developing an invasive plant species policy and/or ordinance before resources are allocated for this work.

If the City Council supports this resolution then the budget/staff impact of invasive species policy implementation will be fully evaluated as part of the policy/ordinance development process.

# Non-Native Plants Should Be Removed

## Shrubs and Small Trees

There are four types of shrubs and small trees that should be removed. Control for all is similar. When small, they are easily removed in spring by pulling them up. Larger specimens should be cut back, pulled out with a winch or vehicle, or dug out with a garden fork and shovel and treated with herbicide when possible (following label instructions).



**Bush Honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.)**  
 These bushes have almost completely taken over Fayetteville. Vast areas are covered by these shrubs, especially along fence rows. There are several species. They are native to Asia. They grow to be 6-20 feet high, have white or pink flowers that bloom in April and later produce soft red watery fruits. They provide poor food for native birds, caterpillars, or pollinators.



**Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)**  
 Multiflora rose was brought to the United States from Asia in the late 1800s and promoted by the government as a "living fence". It grows up to 13 feet and forms bushes or sometimes vine-like stems. It has attractive white to pinkish flowers and produces up to one million seeds per year. It spreads when birds eat the seeds, which can remain alive in the soil for up to 20 years. It also spreads when branches touch the soil and develop roots. Multiflora roses have extremely sharp recurved thorns.



**Chinese and European Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*, and *L. sinense*)**  
 Privets have been widely planted for hedges and are originally from Europe and China. They are semievergreen to evergreen and can form shrubs up to 30 feet high. They form fruits that become almost black in winter and are spread by birds.



**Bradford or Callery Pears (*Pyrus calleryana*)**  
 These trees are native to China. The flowers are generally distasteful to pollinators. The fruits are dispersed by birds. They form dense thickets that crowd out native plants.

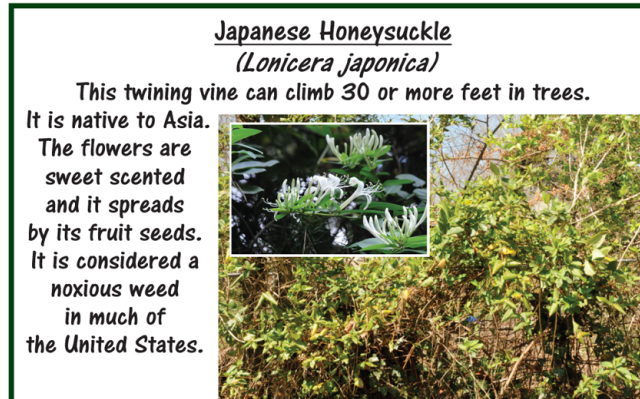


## Invasive Vines

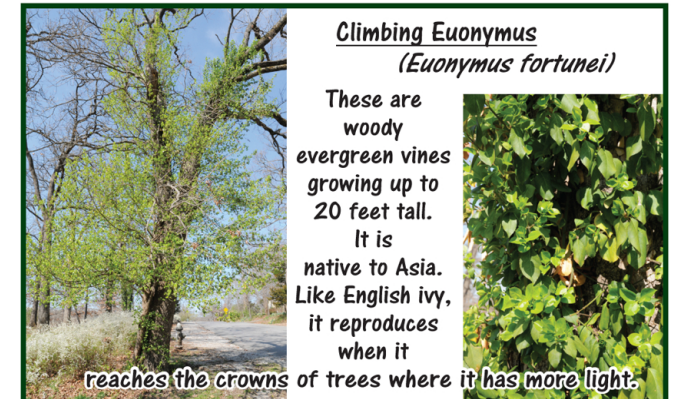
There are three invasive non-native vines in Northwest Arkansas causing damage to native trees and shrubs. All of these vines should be removed by cutting them at the base and if possible treating the vine stumps with herbicide (following label instructions). The three vines are:



**English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)**  
 This widely planted evergreen vine is native to Europe. It can cover trees with such a dense mass that the trees fall from the heavy weight. It is non-flowering when young, but when it reaches the crowns of trees it produces flowers and seeds that are spread by birds.



**Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)**  
 This twining vine can climb 30 or more feet in trees. It is native to Asia. The flowers are sweet scented and it spreads by its fruit seeds. It is considered a noxious weed in much of the United States.



**Climbing Euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*)**  
 These are woody evergreen vines growing up to 20 feet tall. It is native to Asia. Like English ivy, it reproduces when it reaches the crowns of trees where it has more light.



## How do Non-Native Plants Harm our Birds, Butterflies, and Bees?

Most songbirds depend upon butterfly and moth caterpillars for feeding their hungry nestlings. Our native insects have evolved to feed on native plants, but often cannot feed on non-native plants, even if naturalized.



Therefore, non-native plants are like uninhabited deserts for birds searching for caterpillars to feed their young.

While some non-native shrubs such as bush honeysuckle produce berries that birds can eat, our native dogwoods and hollies produce far better food for birds. Non-native plants such as bush honeysuckle and Bradford (Callery) pears are not very attractive to bees and other pollinators compared to our native plants.



## What are our Alternatives?

The Ozarks have a large number of attractive native plants that can be planted in place of invasive non-native plants.

These include the dogwoods, hollies, redbuds, spicebush, sassafras, pawpaw, serviceberry, hawthorne, native sweet crabapple, milkweeds, Echinacea, black-eyed Susans, and bluestem grasses.

## Recommended Technique for Removing Non-Natives from Riparian Areas

When removing non-native plants from sensitive riparian areas like stream or river banks it is critical to take some consideration of the best method to remove the targeted plants without jeopardizing the stability of the bank. In some cases, it is absolutely best not to remove non-native plants because their roots may be the only thing that is holding the stream bank together and preventing bank erosion. Do not jeopardize stream bank stability for the removal of invasive plants. If non-native plants are holding a stream bank together and they are all removed at once, then you will increase the chances of accelerating stream bank erosion and degrading wildlife habitat and water quality. Removing non-natives should be viewed as a long war and not a short battle. In other words don't try to win the battle in one day by removing all of the non-natives only to lose the war by losing a stream bank. Non-natives are very hard to get rid of in some cases and a vigilant perennial effort is needed to keep them at bay regardless. If you only have a few non-natives that you wish to remove and it will not jeopardize bank stability then go for all of them at once, but be certain before acting. The further away from the stream bank you go the more appropriate other methods of invasive plant control become. If there is any doubt, contact a soil and water conservation specialist before acting.

### Recommended techniques for removing non-native species from riparian areas are:

- Selectively prune, cut, remove seed heads from, or pull non-natives, and replace them immediately with native plants suitable for the site. Do not pull or spray plants located on stream banks.
- Repeat pruning of non-natives as necessary throughout the growing season to favor the newly planted native replacements.
- Repeat as necessary for a period of years.

Written by

**Dr. Don Steinkraus, Cindi Cope, John Pennington**

Photos © D. Steinkraus

for additional information, contact

**Washington County Extension Service**

**479-444-1755**



## Invasive Non-Native Plants of Northwest Arkansas



Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas are being taken over by invasive non-native plants. The plants were released in North America either on purpose by early settlers or accidentally from Asia or Europe. While these plants can be attractive, they out compete our native plants killing and smothering them, and they provide inferior food for birds, butterflies, and pollinators.

## Why Be Concerned?

Our woods and hedgerows were once filled with attractive native shrubs, such as dogwoods, redbuds, sassafras, spicebush, and wildflowers such as trillium, bloodroot, trout lilies, and others.

In Fayetteville, invasive plants have almost eliminated our native understory plants.

These noxious plants are spreading rapidly in the countryside as well and the time to remove these plants from our ecosystem is now.

## How Do Non-Native Plants Harm Our Native Plants?

Many of these invasive plants either are semi-evergreen (such as Japanese honeysuckle, English ivy, or Euonymus), or they leaf out earlier than our native wildflowers and shrubs, smothering them by stealing sunlight needed for photosynthesis. In addition, many of them are vines, climbing over trees and shrubs, literally choking trees to death, robbing them of sunlight and breaking trees by their sheer weight.

In the major ice storm of January 2009, trees covered with vines suffered much greater damage due to the weight of the vines on the trees.

Often many of these invasive species act together and large areas are covered with bush honeysuckle, privet, multiflora rose, Euonymus and Japanese honeysuckle vines, forming nearly impenetrable jungles.

## BEWARE OF THE ALIEN INVADER

If you have walked through Gulley Park, Mount Sequoyah Woods or in many of our neighborhoods, you have probably noticed a bush that greens up early in the spring, has pretty red berries in the fall, looks nice and seems to be growing everywhere. It is **Bush Honeysuckle**, a plant brought into this country in the late 1800's from eastern Asia and promoted as a hedge, ground cover and landscape plant. It certainly had those qualities but what wasn't realized then was that it had a **dark side** – it could spread and grow into almost any habitat around it -- wet, dry, sunny or shady. So now, we are seeing it where it was never intended to be – in our forests, our open prairie areas, beside our streams and lakes. It has become an **“invasive alien”** of the worst order and magnitude with the destructive capacity to slowly take over and replace native plant and animal communities.

This alien invader is easily identified. It has, of course, a bush configuration and grows four to eight feet high forming dense thickets. Its leaves are pointed and located oppositely on the branch. In the spring, yellow/white flowers grow at the base of the leaves where paired red berries develop in late summer.

**Bush Honeysuckle** is spread by birds and by root propagation. It is often seen growing into the margins of forests --**from our properties!** -- where its dense, compact form and early spring leafing effectively shades out the crested iris, trout lily, trillium, spicebush and other normal flora of the forest floor. If allowed to grow unimpeded, it can actually prevent the natural regeneration of forest trees and halt normal forest succession. Its berries, consisting mostly of carbohydrates, do not make good food for birds, especially migrating species, which need berries and nuts that are rich in fat and protein for long lasting food stores. And, of course, when there are no nuts to eat, the squirrels and chipmunks disappear followed by the owls, hawks and foxes that feed on them and eventually, the normal balance between the plants and animals in their natural habitats is destroyed.

Well, what can be done to fend off this “evil alien invader”? For one thing, **don't allow it to grow on your property**. When the invaders are small (“alien babies”), they can easily be pulled out by hand. When they are full grown, stronger steps are needed. The conservation departments of Missouri, Ohio, Indiana and other states recommend cutting the “invader” at its base and painting the stump with a 20% or higher concentration of glyphosate (TM Roundup or Rodeo). This helps to discourage the invader from rising up again, but often repeat cutting and herbicide applications are needed in the succeeding 3-5 years --this invader is no weakling!

What are the consequences if we do not act? -- **a major alien take-over!** What should we do? I propose that we -- **arm ourselves, declare war on the “aliens” and start a major community crusade (campaign) and get after these guys -- its time to act!**

“Crusadingly” submitted,

Pete Heinzelmann

# Beware of the Evil Alien Invader

## Bush Honeysuckle





# Springtime



# Skull Creek Trail



# Before





After



Joel Walsh's Article on Bush Honeysuckle

November 2013

I commend NWA Times reporter, Joel Walsh, for his timely and important article about the threat that invasive bush honeysuckle poses for our native plant and animal habitats in and around Fayetteville. As he stated, this plant was brought into this country from Asia in the late 1800s and promoted as a hedge and groundcover. Years ago, it was actually sold at a local nursery, which probably explains why there is so much of it here now. What wasn't known then was its ability to invade and take over areas where it never was intended to be.

We now are seeing it in our urban forests (Mt. Sequoyah), our parks, and along our streams and trails. Its dense thickets, which green up early in the spring, effectively shade out native wildflowers and tree seedlings and block our view of these special areas. It also threatens the interdependent relationships between native plants and animals that have developed over thousands of years and that have led to the incredible biodiversity that we enjoy today. When monocultures like bush honeysuckle take over, diversity goes away. Its berries, which consist mostly of sugar, do not provide the balanced (diverse) and healthy diet that birds need. Besides sugars, birds need the fats and proteins that the seeds and insects of native habitats provide for them and that doesn't occur with monocultures of bush honeysuckle.

My own personal experience with bush honeysuckle occurred on a small wooded lot next to our home where our kids used to play. That was thirty years ago. Since then it has been gradually filled in and overgrown with bush honeysuckle to the point where one could not see into it or walk through it. About three months ago, we began the process of removing this invasive plant by pulling out the smaller ones and cutting the larger ones at their base and painting the stumps with glyphosate herbicide (like 20% Roundup TM). The stems and branches were taken to the curb, picked up by a city truck with a "clam shell grabber" and hauled away. The first load was free - a really good deal to get rid of a really bad actor like bush honeysuckle!

We are now looking forward to seeing the return of what our natural Ozark habitat has always provided - dogwoods, serviceberry, crested iris, trout lily, trillium and many more species of native plants and animals (especially birds) that should be here next to our home.

Pete Heinzelmann  
Fayetteville (841-3404)