

Guide to Removing Invasive Species in your own backyard

Invasive plant species are non-native aggressive plants that threaten and degrade our ecosystems.

Brought in primarily through the landscape trade, these plants have escaped cultivation and are overwhelming our sensitive habitats. Fast growing and reproducing quickly, invasives shade out native plant seedlings, smother trees and outcompete for resources such as light, water and soil nutrients. By preventing native species (even oaks!) from growing, invasives prevent native birds and other animals from completing their life cycles. This changes the profile of our forests, and open spaces.

Many invasive plants in Raleigh are evergreen and produce a lot of pollen, creating safety hazards for people such as visual obstructions along our greenways and roads and health hazards during peak pollen seasons.

Preventing, removing, and monitoring for new infestations are important steps to maintain ecosystem and human health.

Using the information below, you can identify and remove invasive plants in your own backyard. This will allow native species room to grow, support local fauna, and strengthen Raleigh's ecosystem.

When working outside, always be safe:

- Wear sturdy, closed toe shoes and clothes that are weather appropriate you don't mind getting dirty.
- Drink plenty of water and don't forget the sunscreen.
- The bugs are coming out so don't forget insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants if you have a sensitivity to poison ivy.
- Wash clothes separately to avoid spreading poison ivy oils.

This guide includes information to help you identify and remove three common backyard invasive species, English Ivy, Autumn Olive and Heavenly Bamboo. Use the photos to identify these plants on your property and follow the simple instructions to learn how to remove them.

For more information about Raleigh's Invasive Species Removal Program, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, [visit our website](#).

English ivy

If the trunks of your trees are green and leafy, you might have English ivy. This vine can rot trees and even topple large oaks.



Removing English Ivy

- Taking care not to damage tree bark, cut completely through the vine at the ground and again at 12".
- Remove that section. Everything above the second cut will die.
- Pull runners along the ground and place in bags to rot for 2 weeks before disposal.

Autumn olive

Autumn Olive is an arching shrub that can reach heights of 20 feet. This noxious plant has no native predators and quickly dominates the understory of our forests.



Removing Autumn Olive:

- Cut back stems and dig out roots.
- Wear gloves to help protect from occasional thorns.

Heavenly bamboo

This evergreen shrub produces bright red berries that are poisonous to birds and other animals. Get rid of this pesky plant to help our feathered friends.



Removing Heavenly Bamboo:

- Be prepared for a battle! These bad actors don't want to leave.
- Dig this shrub using a sharp shovel.
- Sometimes a rope and a lawn tractor can be employed to carefully pull them out once loosened.

Also lurking in your yard might be:

- privet,
- Japanese honeysuckle,
- thorny olive,
- Asian wisterias

Reminder: Solid Waste Services has temporarily suspended curbside yard waste collection. Follow this [link](#) for tips on how to manage yard waste in the interim.