

inSTALLations

June 2008

Alien Invaders

Autumn Olive



Originally brought from Europe in the 1830s, **autumn olive**, *Elaeagnus umbellata*, was touted as a great windbreak, an erosion control, and good cover and food for wildlife throughout the 1900s. Recently, we

have come to know Autumn Olive as a dangerously prolific plant that can produce more than 200,000 seeds each year. Fruits are spread through dropping berries or by birds that eat the berries and spread the seeds.

Autumn olive out competes native plant species. It is able to produce its own nitrogen, which allows it to grow in poor soils. It is drought tolerant and creates heavy shade for those species growing around it. Reproducing rapidly, it begins fruiting at only 3 years old.

If left unmanaged, autumn olive will push out native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs, significantly decreasing the plant diversity on a site. Although autumn olive can provide food for wildlife, there are many other native species that provide better food, cover, windbreaks, and erosion control. Here at the Nature Center, we work to control autumn olive to give native species the opportunity to thrive.



Autumn olive taking over a field.

Other Aliens

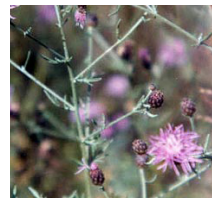
This common plant decorates most grassy areas and even ventures into lightly wooded spots. Although there are several species of **dandelions** native to the U.S., none are native to Michigan.



Garlic mustard is a formidable enemy to Dutchman's breeches,

spring beauty, wild ginger and trilliums. Garlic mustard is not eaten by Michigan animals and is capable of producing several thousand seeds allowing it to quickly cover the forest.

Originally brought to the U.S. in hay, **spotted knapweed** becomes established in open, sunny locations. This invasive species releases chemicals into the soil that prevent some native species from growing.



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