

Natural Resource Protection News

*From the Town of Canandaigua Environmental Conservation
Board*

A Primer on Invasive Species - Check in on Your Trees

By: ECB members with excerpts from the NY DEC Newsletter

The ECB is concentrating on Invasive Species education during the summer. We have upgraded the [ECB web page](#), accessible on the town's [website](#), to provide materials to demystify the identification and management techniques for non-native plants and pests living in our yards.

This newly designed web page features links to articles, information and webinars from various natural resource partners. Our board members have been working to give our residents an easy access for vital information on the questions you may have regarding this topic and others. [Take a look!](#)

Our members are also working on an invasive species display in the lobby of Town Hall. This display augments the information on our web page. It's all about invasives this time of year. So, take a moment and stop by to see what might be growing in your yard!

Below is a sample of a newsletter published on July 22, 2020 by the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC), one of our favorite education partners. These newsletters contain valuable information on many topics that may

interest you. We have provided links to many of them on our web page. Or, you can subscribe online to receive your own monthly edition at dec.ny.gov. Click [HERE](#) to read the full issue.

Gypsy Moth Caterpillar Damage Common Across the State

If you've noticed it's a boom year for gypsy moth caterpillar activity, you're not



alone. This summer, DEC has been receiving reports of higher-than-usual gypsy moth populations and leaf damage in several parts of New York State.

Gypsy moths are non-native, but naturalized, meaning they will always be around in our forests. They tend to spike in numbers roughly every 10-15 years, but these outbreaks are usually end by natural causes such as predators and disease.

The caterpillars are beginning to disappear now as they pupate and become moths. One year of defoliation is

not likely to kill your trees, but 2-3 years of defoliation typically leads to some tree death. DEC will be monitoring populations to predict whether another major defoliation could be expected next year or not. For more information on gypsy moths in New York State, [visit our website](#).

Photo: Gypsy moth caterpillars were a common sight on deciduous trees across the state this summer. At this time of the season, the caterpillars are beginning to turn into moths. (Photo by Bugwood.org)

Check in With Your Trees

If you have trees on your street or in your yard, this is your friendly reminder to do a seasonal check-in. Take a look at your trees and ask yourself the following questions:

- Are the trees healthy looking?
- Are there many dead branches?
- Do you see signs of significant damage by insects, or [signs of any invasive forest pests](#)?
- Do you notice any potential cause for concern such as off-color leaves, new fungal growth, or cavities?

If you have concerns, you may want to [contact a certified arborist or tree service](#). Checking in with your trees periodically and noticing any unusual changes is the first step in making sure they can continue to help our Earth for years to come.

What You May See Now

Tar Spot

Noticing black spots on your maple leaves this summer? Your maple tree may have tar spot - but fear not! [Tar spot is a fungal disease](#) that resembles splotches of tar on leaf surfaces, but it is mostly just a cosmetic nuisance. Heavy infections may cause early leaf drop, but the fungus does not cause long-term damage to the tree.



The fungus can overwinter in leaf litter in your yard. If you would like to prevent tar spot in your trees for next year, be sure to remove all leaf litter when the leaves fall in autumn.

Photo: Maple leaves with signs of tar spot.

Oak Wilt

In July and August, keep a look out for signs of [oak wilt disease](#). Oak wilt is a fungal disease that affects both red and white oaks, but red oaks (pointy leaf tips)

often die much faster than white oaks (rounded leaf tips). Oak wilt symptoms include:

- Most or all of the leaves fall off of the tree in July or August.
- Leaves turn brown from the outer edge back towards the stem.
- Leaves of all colors will fall off the tree, and many will still have green on them
- Dieback may be visible starting at the top of the tree and progressing downward.



DEC tracks and manages oak wilt disease in New York State. If you see these signs on an oak this July or August, [you may contact DEC's Forest Health team](#) for confirmation.

Photo: Leaves from a red oak tree infected with oak wilt. Infected red oak trees lose all or most of their leaves very quickly in July or August.

Get to Know New York's Natives: Cow Parsnip

Caution: This native plant can cause burns on skin

If you follow DEC on any social media platforms, it's hard to miss that giant hogweed season is upon us. Giant hogweed is a large invasive plant from Eurasia that contains sap which can cause burning on your skin. Giant hogweed is found in

many parts of the state (particularly Western and Central NY), but there are many look-alike species that can often get misidentified as this plant.

In New York State, our closest native look-alike species is cow parsnip (*Heracleum*



maximum). Cow parsnip can grow to be more than six feet tall and has white, umbel-shaped flowers.

The easiest way to distinguish cow parsnip from giant hogweed is by looking at the stem. While the invasive giant hogweed has purple splotches and coarse white hairs on its stem,

the stem of the cow parsnip plant is plain green with fine white hairs. Cow parsnip's flowers attract birds, butterflies, and ladybugs, but at this time of year, the plant has typically just finished or is wrapping up its blooming stage.

Cow parsnip is relatively uncommon in New York, but it prefers to grow in cooler habitats with moist soils or near water. Like invasive giant hogweed, our native cow parsnip also contains sap that can cause a blistering, itchy rash on skin, though the sap is not considered to be as toxic as giant hogweed. If you come in contact with the sap of this plant, immediately wash the area with soap and water and protect it from sunlight for 48 hours.

You can [read more about native cow parsnip on our website](#).

If you believe you have spotted the purple-splotched stem of an invasive giant hogweed plant this summer, [please report it to DEC](#).

Photo: Our native cow parsnip blooms earlier in the season and tends to be shorter in height than invasive giant hogweed. Cow parsnip has a plain green stem with fine white hairs.

Read the rest [HERE](#).
