

# Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

## Japanese pachysandra

*Pachysandra terminalis* Sieb. & Zucc.



Jil Swearingen, National Park Service

### Background:

This native of eastern Asia was brought to the U.S. as an ornamental groundcover. It is also known as Japanese spurge and Chinese fever vine.

### Range:

This plant can be found in scattered locations throughout the Mid-Atlantic states, south to the Carolinas and west to Wisconsin. It is reported as invasive in PA, VA and DC.

### Description:

This evergreen perennial groundcover can reach 12 inches in height and spread to form dense mats. The small (two to four inches in length) oval-shaped leaves alternate along the stem. Inconspicuous white flowers appear between March and April.



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### Ecological Threat:

Because this plant grows very quickly it can displace native vegetation and form a monoculture that provides little benefit to wildlife.

### Biology and Spread:

This plant reproduces vegetatively through underground stems and roots.

### Habitat:

This plant escapes from cultivation and colonizes forest and meadow edges. It can grow in deep shade.

### How to Control this Species:

Hand pulling and controlled burning have been used successfully on this plant.

Pachysandra can also be controlled with several readily available herbicides, such as glyphosate. A pre-emergent herbicide can also be applied to the ground to kill the plants before they emerge. This may have less of an impact on desired native vegetation. Be sure to follow the label's instructions and all state herbicide requirements.