

## INVASIVE HITCHHIKERS Fact Sheet # 8

# What Hunters Need To Know!



Invasive species are taking over parks and natural areas throughout Pennsylvania, making hunting difficult and damaging valuable habitat. Luckily hunters can play a critical role in slowing the spread of invasives.

“Invasive species” are non-native plants, animals and pathogens that can cause harm to the economy, environment and human health.

Invasive plants tend to grow quickly and thickly, potentially

blocking trails. This makes it more difficult for people to hunt and enjoy the outdoors.

Mile-a-minute, for example, is a vine that can grow up to a foot per day! It can quickly make trails impassable with its painful spines. (*see photo below*).

Invasive species are also a concern because they can ruin the beauty of Pennsylvania landscapes and lower biodiversity (the variety of living things in an area).

We need biodiversity to maintain healthy habitats.

Plus it’s simply more interesting and exciting to hunt in a landscape full of different shrubs, trees, flowers and grasses, rather than in a boring field of the same invasive plant. But that is exactly what could happen if an invasive species appears...all other species, including wildlife, may be chased out!



## Make A Difference!

Now that you know why invasive species are a concern, what can you do to help minimize their spread? Luckily there are many small, easy steps you can take to keep invasives in check.

- Know how to identify some of the common invasive species in your area. To learn more, visit [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm)
- Clean off clothing, shoes and equipment before leaving an area. Bag any dirt and seeds and dispose of this in the trash.
- Don’t move firewood! Buy it locally. This will help prevent destructive invasive insects like the emerald ash borer from spreading. Go to [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info) for more details.
- Volunteer to help prevent and control invasive species. Contact your local state park or forest office, conservation district, state game lands office or hunting club to get involved.

