

What Trail Maintainers Need To Know!

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

“Invasive species” are non-native plants and animals 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 enjoy recreational opportunities.

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 more interesting to be in a landscape full of different plants, rather than in a boring field of the same invasive. But that is exactly what could happen if an invasive species appears... all other species 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 and control some of the invasives in your area, so you can remove them while their population is small. Visit <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/plants/invasiveplants/index.htm> for more information.
- Don't create new trails through known or suspected infestations.
- Clean off clothing, shoes, equipment and vehicles before leaving an area. Bag any dirt, seeds and other plant parts and dispose in the trash.
- Use weed-free mulch like straw or wood chips, not hay, which can be full of weed seeds.
- Choose native plants for use along the trail.
- If you need volunteers to help with control projects, contact your local conservation district, scout troop or watershed group to get involved.

