

## **Invasive Plants: Early Detection and Rapid Response Unwanted in Michigan State Parks**

**Visitors to Michigan state parks or recreation areas are invited to participate in a new Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) initiative to find the first outbreaks of unwanted invasive plants.**

Early detection will aid in rapid response control measures aimed at eliminating the invasive plants before they become widely established.

This summer, three invasive plants -- Japanese knotweed, black swallow-wort and garlic mustard -- are being targeted for EDRR by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Japanese knotweed and black swallow-wort are not widely established in the state, and while garlic mustard is widespread in southern Michigan, it is still uncommon in the Northern Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula state parks.

Invasive plants crowd out native species and change the ecology of natural areas. Complex food webs are simplified as areas are taken over by a single plant species. Forest regeneration is often negatively impacted and recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing, may also be lost or compromised. Even park pathways and buildings can be damaged by invasive plants.

Most invasive species are introduced to new areas by humans. Park visitors can help prevent the spread of invasive plants by cleaning your boots/shoes, clothes, car and trailer tires or other equipment before entering or leaving a park.

“We hope that everyone will keep an eye out for these invaders and report their locations,” said Ray Fahlsing, DNRE state park stewardship unit manager. **“Finding the first pioneering plants and responding rapidly with control measures will prevent damage to park natural resources in the most effective way.”**

By reporting Japanese knotweed, black swallow-wort and garlic mustard sightings, you can help protect the natural resources that offer public recreation and educational opportunities.

**Possible sightings can be reported at any state park by filling out the Unwanted Plants Detection Card, by marking the location of the detected plants on a park visitor map, or by recording the GPS coordinates.** You can turn in the cards, maps or recorded information at any state park, e-mail the information to [DNR-RecreationFeedback@michigan.gov](mailto:DNR-RecreationFeedback@michigan.gov) with “Unwanted Plants” in the subject line, fax it to 517-373-4625, or mail it to DNRE-Recreation Division, Attention: EDDR, P.O. Box 30257, Lansing, MI 48909-7757. **Sightings can also be reported at: [www.MISIN.msu.edu](http://www.MISIN.msu.edu)**

For more information about getting involved in the EDRR initiative, including how to identify invasive plants, visit the DNRE website at [www.michigan.gov/dnr-parkstewardship](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr-parkstewardship)

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment is committed to the conservation, protection, management, and accessible use and enjoyment of the state’s environment, natural resources, and related economic interests for current and future generations.

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