

Invasive plant species



The consistent disturbance of the roadside edge provides ample space for invasive species to take root, flower, and spread.

Additionally, road construction equipment, mowers, car tires, and even pedestrians and bicyclists can easily carry the seeds or root fragments of invasive plants down the road.

Because the roadsides are public spaces, no one person may feel entirely responsible for the management and control of these roadside plants. Because of this, slowing the spread of invasive roadside plants requires persistent effort and consistent monitoring, management, and public outreach.

Identifying the location and [species of common invasive plants](#)¹ along rural roads tells us:

- where towns should implement specific treatment practices.
- how to educate landowners about the spread of invasive species, including from and to their private property.
- how to help road crews identify new infestations of invasive plants, particularly if the small plants can be treated.
- where to exercise extreme caution when performing roadwork, ditching, or mowing in order to stop the spread of invasive plant seeds or roots via movement of equipment or soil.



These are all plant species that are invasive in Vermont. Top, Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica); bottom right, wild chervil (Anthriscus sylvestris); bottom left, wild parsnip (Pastinaca sativa).

Recommendations

Follow all best management practices related to roadside invasive plants, making sure to clean equipment before and after roadside work. [Best Management Practices for Roadside Invasive Plants](#),² from the Nature



More invasives. From left, common buckthorn or European buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), bush Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.), and Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*).

Conservancy, describes how to reduce the spread of invasive plant fragments or seeds when grading, ditching, laying culverts, transporting equipment, mowing, and handling soil known to contain invasive plants.

Plan to treat isolated existing patches of invasive species in roadside ditches by mechanical or chemical means as appropriate.

Preserve trees and shrubs that provide shade on roadsides. Invasive plants, like many plants, are less likely to thrive in shady areas.

Know where invasive species are along town roads, and where they aren't.

Mow first in areas without invasive species, then mow areas with known infestations (although do not mow knotweed or purple loosestrife). Follow best practices to keep mowing and ditching equipment clear of invasive plant fragments and seeds.

Do not mow invasive plants after seeds have set. Knowing when invasive plants bloom will let towns use mowing to their advantage to reduce the spread of invasive seeds. See Phenology and Management Calendar of 12 Common Roadside Invasive Plant Species in Vermont on page 30.

Partner with private landowners to prevent and manage invasive plant species regionally using integrated [best management practices](#).³

Resources

1. "Gallery of Terrestrial Invasive Plants," Vermont Invasives, bit.ly/VT_InvasivePlants.
2. The Nature Conservancy, *Best Management Practices for Roadside Invasive Plants*, bit.ly/TNC_RoadsideInvasives.
3. Vermont Invasives, *Forestry Best Management Practices*, bit.ly/InvasiveBMPs.