Invasive Plant Species in North Branford

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INTRODUCTION

Invasive species are situated in various types of ecosystems around the world. Although they may not seem too destructive, invasive species can cause harm to surrounding species and ecosystems. They are known to overgrow and overpopulate quickly as there are no predators to control them. This causes competition among species, often resulting with the invasive species as a victor. These species were termed invasive as they are organisms that are not native to the environment that they are currently living in. They can be spread easily through human activities as well as a byproduct of climate change.

The purpose of this research was to show how prevalent invasive species are and to determine the impact that invasive species have on the surrounding ecosystems.

SPECIES FOUND

- **Milfoil (Fig. 1&2): It originated from Europe, Asia, and North Africa and it is unknown as to how it came over to the US. The plant is harmful because it crowds out the native species in ponds.**
- **Autumn Olive (Fig. 3&4): It originated from Eastern Asia and it outcompetes the native species, causing a decrease in biodiversity.**
- **Japanese Barberry (Fig. 5&6): Originates from Japan and it alters soil pH, nitrogen levels, and biological activities in the soil**
- **Common Reed (Fig. 7): Originated in Europe and it crowds out the native species around it.**

Fig. 1: The invasive species, milfoil, found in Lanes Pond in North Branford
Fig. 2: A comparative photo of the milfoil plant to show how overpopulated the species can get in a pond. Photos from Connecticut Controlling Invasive Plants

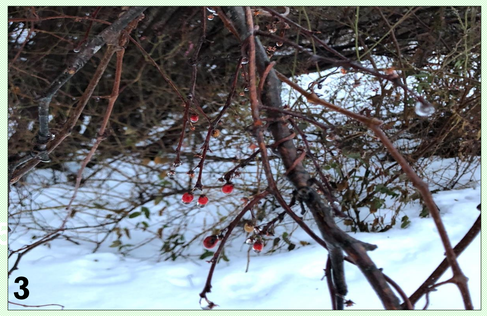

Fig. 3. Picture of an autumn olive bush at the North Branford High School.
Fig. 4. The autumn olive bush in full bloom; photo from *Invasive Plants Common in Connecticut.*

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. **Be aware of the different types of species that live in your area.**
2. **Volunteer with organizations to remove invasive species from your area.**
3. **Clean, Drain, Dry – rinse gear and other materials used to ensure that no organisms are going back home with you**
4. **Wash pets if they were in a new/different area.**
5. **Use local plants and seeds when gardening.**

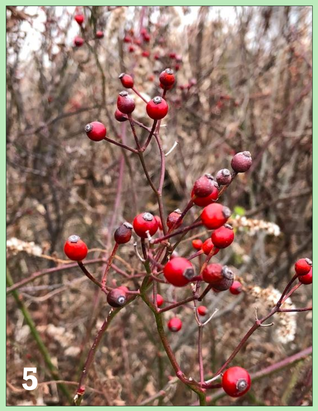

Fig. 5 & 6: Japanese Barberry taken at Lanes Pond in North Branford

METHODS

- **To conduct this research during the pandemic, I talked with my community partner through video chat about the different invasive plant species.**
- **After talking about the invasive plants, I went out on my own and examined nature spots in my town to see if any of the species we talked about were there.**
- **When a species was noticed, field photos were taken of it.**
- **This project was done through the months of November 2020–February 2021 in North Branford, CT.**

All throughout the town there are various types of invasive plant species found such as the milfoil plant (Fig. 1&2), autumn olive (Fig. 3&4), Japanese barberry (Fig. 5&6) and common reed (*Phragmites*) (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7. Field of common reeds (*Phragmites*) behind North Branford High School.

CONCLUSION

Through this project, people are able to see just how abundant invasive species are and that they can be anywhere. Educating people about invasive species could allow for more regulation of the species. Slowing the spread of invasive species will ultimately allow for ecosystems to thrive with their native species, as they won't have to compete for resources as much.

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