

Recommendations for Disposal of Non-native, Invasive Land Plants

Prepared by the Frankestown Land Trust

Non-native, invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed, Multiflora Rose or Oriental Bittersweet, can be a real nuisance. They can spread easily, choke out desirable native plants and cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year. The Frankestown Land Trust urges everyone to dispose of invasives carefully and adopt recommendations described in the following summary of “Methods for Disposing Non-Native Invasive Plants”, University of New Hampshire, Cooperative Extension.

There are many ways to remove non-native and invasive land plants, but once removed care is needed to dispose the removed material so the plants don't grow where discarded.

How and When to Dispose of Invasive plants? Most invasives are spread by seeds that are dispersed by wind, water, animals or people. Some reproduce vegetatively from pieces of stems or roots. Others spread by both seeds and vegetative means. Knowing how the plant spreads helps determine the appropriate disposal method. To prevent seed from spreading remove invasive plants before seeds are produced. Some plants continue to grow, flower and set seed even after pulling or cutting. Seeds can remain viable in the ground for many years. If the plant has flowers or seeds, place the flowers and seeds in a heavy plastic bag “head first” at the weeding site and transport to the disposal site. The following are general descriptions of disposal methods.

Burning: Large woody branches and trunks can be used as firewood or burned in piles. For outside burning, a written fire permit from the Frankestown Fire Department is required unless the ground is covered in snow. Logs larger than 5 inches in diameter can't be brought to the Transfer Station. Invasive plants with easily airborne seeds like black swallow-wort with mature seed pods (indicated by their brown color) shouldn't be burned as the seeds may disperse by the hot air created by the fire.

Bagging (solarization): Use this technique with softer tissue plants. Use heavy black or clear plastic bags (contractor grade), making sure that no parts of the plants poke through. Allow the bags to sit in the sun for several weeks and on dark pavement for the best results.

Tarping and Drying: Pile material on a sheet of plastic and cover with a tarp, fastening the tarp to the ground and monitoring it for escapes. Let the material dry for several weeks, or until it is clearly nonviable.

Chipping: Use this method for woody plants that don't reproduce vegetatively.

Burying: This is risky, but can be done with watchful diligence. Lay thick plastic in a deep pit before placing the cut up plant material in the hole. Place the material away from the edge of the plastic before covering it with more heavy plastic. Eliminate as much air as possible and toss in soil to weight down the material in the pit. Note that the top of the buried material should be at least three feet underground. Japanese knotweed should be at least 5 feet underground!

Drowning: Fill a large barrel with water and place soft-tissue plants in the water. Check after a few weeks and look for rotted plant material (roots, stems, leaves, flowers). Well-rotted plant material may be composted. A word of caution- seeds may still be viable after using this method. Do this before seeds are set. This method isn't used often. Be prepared for an awful stink!

Composting: Invasive plants can take root in compost. **DO NOT** compost any invasives unless you know there is no viable (living) plant material left. Use one of the above techniques (bagging, tarping, drying, chipping, or drowning) to render the plants nonviable before composting. Closely examine the plant before composting and avoid composting seeds.

Be diligent looking for seedlings for years in areas where removal and disposal took place.

Additional information including specific treatment of common invasives can be obtained from the following website: http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/resource000988_rep1720.pdf

New Hampshire Regulations

Prohibited invasive species shall only be disposed of in a manner that renders them nonliving and nonviable. (Agr. 3802.04) No person shall collect, transport, import, export, move, buy, sell, distribute, propagate or transplant any living and viable portion of any plant species, which includes all of their cultivars and varieties, listed in Table 3800.1 of the New Hampshire prohibited invasive species list. (Agr 3802.01)

An exception to the regulation covers the moving of plant material for the purpose of eradication