

Invasive Plant Species, Bamboo & Deer Repellent Device Discussion

Council Work Session – Jan. 13, 2025



Invasive Plant Species

- Invasive plants are species intentionally or accidentally introduced by human activity into a region in which they did not evolve and cause harm to natural resources, economic activity or humans.
- Invasive plants typically exhibit the following characteristics:
 - Rapid growth and maturity
 - Prolific seed production
 - Highly successful seed dispersal, germination and colonization
 - Rampant vegetative spread
 - Ability to out-compete native species
 - High cost to remove or control



Why Invasive Species Matter

- We want to create and preserve healthy environments for ourselves and future generations of people and wildlife.
- Invasive species can lead to the extinction of native plants and animals, destroy biodiversity, and reduce and alter wildlife habitat.
- The spread of invasive species negatively affects the environment, economy, human and animal health and safety.
- All life depends on healthy ecosystems.





Invasive plants can cause these negative effects and safety concerns

- Displace native plants which interferes with the food web, reducing healthy food for birds, fish, butterflies and other wildlife destroys native habitat and inhibits forest regeneration endangers species through loss of food and habitat, potentially to the point of extinction decreases plant diversity which is essential for healthy forests
- Smother and strangle trees and other plants
- Reduce water quality through increased erosion and decreased water filtration, and tree stability affecting the tree canopy
- Shade and choke out aquatic plants reducing healthy food and oxygen for fish and other aquatic life
- Change the soil chemistry and inhibit other plants from growing
- Falling Trees: Pest and disease infestations or smothering invasive plants can cause instability or kill a tree creating hazardous conditions on trails and for nearby residents and their property.
- Visibility: Invasive species can create dense walls of foliage that prevent you from seeing threats.



Managing Invasive Species

- The most effective way to manage invasive species is through prevention by not introducing or transporting them.
- It is also important to be able to recognize invasive species from look-alike native species and to report sightings to the appropriate organizations tracking them.
- Once invasive species are established, there are different methods you can use to control, remove and dispose of them.



Virginia Invasive Plant Species List

- The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Natural Heritage currently identifies 90 invasive plant species that threaten or potentially threaten our natural areas, parks and other protected lands in Virginia.
- The list is for educational purposes only and has no regulatory authority.



Vienna's Park Habitat Restoration Events

- To enhance ecological diversity in Vienna's parks, regular volunteer opportunities are available. Volunteers can help by removing invasive species, planting native plants, spreading wood chips, and preparing for future plantings. Gloves and hand tools are provided.
- Habitat restoration events take place:
 - Southside Park – Monday's from 10 a.m.- 12 p.m. *Meet at Ware-Walker entrance. *Advance sign-up appreciated but not required.
 - Wildwood Park - There is an event most Sundays however the meeting times change seasonally. Please check the Town calendar for the meeting dates and times. *Meet at Follin Lane entrance.
 - Northside Park – Saturday mornings in May, 9-11 a.m. *Meet at the north end of the wooden bridge.
 - Beulah Road Leaf Site (442 Beulah Rd. NE) – Wednesday mornings in May (starting May 7 and no workday May 28), 9-11 a.m. Parking is available on Sherwood Drive, NE. *Meet at the main road into the site.

Bamboo



- ▶ Running bamboo is a fast-growing, invasive grass with a complex, horizontal root system called rhizomes that aggressively spread underground, as much as 15 feet per year.
- ▶ Once planted, running bamboo can eventually take over yards and travel across property lines, creating issues for adjacent property owners and local jurisdictions.
- ▶ In 2017, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation authorizing localities to regulate bamboo. Fairfax County considered an ordinance for years but pursued educational efforts simultaneously.



Property Owner Responsibilities

- In March of 2022, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors passed a new Bamboo Ordinance that went into effect on January 1, 2023, to be enforced by the Department of Code Compliance on an individual complaint basis. Fairfax County Code § 119-3-2 provides that:
 - A bamboo owner must not allow running bamboo to spread from the bamboo owner's property to any public right-of-way or any adjoining property not owned by the bamboo owner, and
 - A bamboo owner must contain the running bamboo to keep it from spreading onto any public right-of-way or adjoining property not owned by the bamboo owner.
 - The new ordinance requires property owners to contain running bamboo on their property and prevent it from spreading beyond their property line.
 - After the issuance of a Notice of Violation, each day that running bamboo remains uncontained may result in a fine of \$50, up to a maximum of \$2,000 in a 12-month period.
 - Property owners may incur additional penalties if they allow bamboo to spread to another adjacent property.

Fairfax County is taking steps to managing bamboo and other invasive species throughout the county.



How to Manage/Control/Remove Bamboo

- Containing Running Bamboo with a Root Barrier
 - The root barrier should be 36" in height, with approximately 30" below ground, and 6" above ground.
- Containment by Mowing and Herbicide Application
 - Cut the bamboo as low to the ground as possible and immediately apply a non-selective herbicide. A brush killer containing a high concentration (20-25%) of glyphosate or triclopyr should be applied to the cut tops of the bamboo within one minute of cutting. Subsequent herbicide applications of the leaves with a 5% concentration of glyphosate or triclopyr will be necessary to contain the bamboo growth for approximately 2-5 years.
- Removing Running Bamboo
 - Digging out bamboo requires heavy equipment and coordination with Virginia 811 (va811.com)
 - Continued removal of new plants and sprouts will be necessary to limit new bamboo growth.



Deer Repellent Devices

- Residents look to prevent deer from snacking on vegetation in their yards through deer repellent devices.
- Ultrasonic pest control devices – sound complaint received by Town resident
 - Emits ultrasonic high-frequency sounds to deter pests
 - Sounds are mostly undetectable to the human ear
 - Sounds may be detectable by household pets
 - Wall mounted or placed in the ground
 - Built-in solar or battery powered
 - Weather resistant
 - Can be combined with motion-sensors and lights to scare deer away



Alternative Deer Repellent Devices

- Chemical Repellents
 - Scent and Taste Based
- Taste Based Repellents
 - Spicy Chili
- Motion-Sensing Repellents
 - Electronic Sprinkler System
 - Electronic pest repellent light
- Physical Deterrents
 - Netting/Fencing



Next Steps

- Invasive Plant Species
 - Should the Town develop a management plan for invasive species on public property?
 - Should the Town create an educational campaign to inform residents on better alternatives that could include native and non-invasive species.
- Bamboo Management
 - Is there a desire to implement a Bamboo Ordinance similar to Fairfax County?
 - Does the Town want to control bamboo on Town properties?
- Deer Repellent Devices
 - Is council concerned with the use of deer repellent devices?