

Ohio Invasive Species List Announced

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The Ohio Department of Agriculture recently released its invasive plant list and on it was the callery pear. This came as no surprise as this plant has been talked about for many years in regards to its invasiveness.

We have watched this tree take over empty fields, right-of-ways and along highways. There is a really interesting story about this tree that I have shared before and will share again in the next few weeks. It's a perfect case story of how something good goes bad.

An invasive species is a plant that is not native to Ohio and one whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health as determined by scientific studies.

Back to the plant list; it wasn't developed on a whim. It took two years of stakeholder outreach and feedback and multiple meetings with a lot of people representing all areas before the list was decided.

Representatives from areas such as the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, The Ohio State University, Nature Centers, Parks, Arboretums and Public Gardens, nurseries, garden centers, trade associations and more were on the committee.

One concern when putting a plant on an invasive species list is that nurseries and growers may have a significant inventory of said plant. If the plant is banned for sales, this can cause financial harm to a business who has a significant amount of said plant in inventory.

Therefore, as in the case of the callery pear, the plant will be phased out of inventory before its completely banned. Nurseries will be allowed to recoup the costs that were already invested in growing these plants prior to them being banned.

Fortunately, many nurseries in Ohio were quite aware of the callery pear issue and began phasing out production a few years ago.

So, this spring, don't go crazy when you see callery pears for sale in a garden center. It's likely we will still see it for a year or so.

Phasing out also gives the industry time to develop alternative plants, according to the ODA website. On a side note, this statement really doesn't apply because it takes a lot longer to develop a specific alternative plant than the phase out period. We just have to figure out other plants that will work in place of the said invasive species.

Garden centers, nurseries and growers are not allowed to sell plants if they are on the invasive species list. The ODA is responsible for monitoring this effort.

All nurseries, growers, garden centers and anyone possessing a nursery license in the state of Ohio have been notified of this new list.

Next week I'll review the case of the callery pear. It's an interesting story about good plants going bad.

For a listing of Ohio's invasive plants (animals, insects, etc.) go the ODNR website.



A field of callery pear



Garlic mustard in bloom in Clifton Gorge (white flowers)