

**Alien Plants Threatening to
Take Over Watershed -
Intrepid group to survey extent and
monitor control measures**

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A group of people met in July at the Frederick County Extension Office to consider the extent of an invasion of Japanese hops. Under the guidance of Phil Pannill of the Maryland Forest Service, it was decided that a Japanese Hops Weed Management Area Committee be formed. The agencies present included representatives of the National Park Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Pennsylvania Departments of Environmental Protection and Conservation and Natural Resources (DEP & DCNR), Frederick County Government, and others from Carroll, Montgomery, and Adams Counties.

Although it sounds like a new dance step from Asia, Japanese hops is an exotic invasive plant, related to the hops used in beer. *Humulus japonicus* is native to eastern Asia and is sometimes used in Chinese herbal medicines. It was brought into the USA for this reason, and has also been planted for ornamental purposes. It can be found in Maryland and adjoining states, along creeks, roadsides, and fence rows. It is a problem because it has very few natural enemies and a very aggressive growth habit. It is an annual plant which flowers from spring to summer with seed dispersion in the fall. So far, only Connecticut and Massachusetts have labeled it as a noxious plant and have prohibited it.

The MD DNR Forest Service will be coordinating the initial survey of how extensive a problem Japanese hops is in the Monocacy watershed. Along with the survey, information will be collected on the attempts that have been made to control it, such as mechanical removal or chemical treatment, and whether those attempts were successful or not.

Following the survey and analysis, a workshop will be conducted for natural resource managers, landowners, and others involved with the Monocacy watershed to pass along this valuable information. If all is successful, we will be able to do a better job in managing Japanese hops within the Monocacy watershed and the lessons learned can be applied to other watersheds and on other invasive plants.