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Delaware County Institute of Science, 11 Veterans Square, Media PA.

Introduced, Non-Native, and Invasive Plants in Mid Atlantic Woods and Wetlands: Is There A Problem in Our Human Habitat?

James A. Schmid

We humans in Delaware County (and the Mid Atlantic States in general) live in urban and suburban landscapes dominated by human activity. For most of us, plants are a minor interest, perhaps a hobby providing us with summer vegetables, decorative blossoms, and gardening exercise, or a green backdrop giving us visual respite from the hard urban surfaces of concrete, glass, and steel---but hardly a major concern as we earn our everyday livings, raise our children, try to stay healthy.

Most of us are but dimly aware of the benefits any plants that share "our" space provide to us. We do not know the names or habits of the hundreds of kinds of green plants that manage to survive in our lawns, parks, roadsides, and stream valleys. We do not know which are natives, which are introduced, which are invasives or potential invasives, which are unique to the ancient wild ecosystems being displaced by ever more roofs and roadways and over abundant white-tailed deer.

As a result, the populations of our plant communities have changed dramatically, not necessarily for the better, even measured over the course of a single human lifespan. Why does this matter? How does it affect us in the 21st century? How big is the problem? What can be done about it? What is being done about it collectively? What can we as individuals do?

Based on more than thirty years of thinking about such questions, Dr. Schmid will show slides, discuss examples, and cite sources for further inquiry from the current literature.

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