

Forest Hero! Network

Ideas for Engaging Our Communities

Spread the word, not the plant!

Activity:

In small groups, choose an activity from the list below and brainstorm how to make that activity work in your community. Here is a list of guiding questions to help you get started:

- What was your motivation for picking that topic?
- Who is your target audience?
- Are you partnering with someone else or another organization? How will you divide tasks?
- How will you advertise this event?
- What resources are available to support you (both through the network and elsewhere)?
- What resources/support do you still need?
- What are your tangibles/intangibles?
- How will you attend to Maslow's Hierarchy?

Outreach Ideas:

- Organize a workday in your community
- Get involved with a local Bioblitz/bliss (see North Branch Nature Center for an example)
- Send out seasonal invasive updates through Front Porch Forum
- Write an article for your local paper
- Volunteer with a local park district or non-profit, offering to help remove invasive plants
- Set up a display in the spaces where people (usually) go:
 - Ex: Town Hall or the local store
 - Ex: Summer Farmer's Markets (June-Sept)
 - Ex: Transfer Station
- Work collaboratively with your local Conservation Commission
 - Is there a project in town that needs volunteers? As part of the Network, we can help you plan that event!
 - Be the voice to the Commission about the issue of invasive plants in your town, and make a record of your time at meetings
- Partner with local school to do a garlic mustard pull event in May
 - Can combine it with a cooking lesson on how to make pesto! (if garlic mustard pulled from safe location, i.e. not near roads or other contaminants)
- Work with a local Conservation District or similar organization to host a regional plant sale in the spring
 - Could also work with them to do restoration plantings in your town where invasive plants have been removed

- Work with your local library
 - Create a display for your local library (ex. The connection between invasive plant and ticks)
 - Host an activity such as reading “Miss Rumphius” with a discussion or craft afterwards
 - Incorporate invasive plants into a fun craft, such as leaf rubbings
- Give an evening virtual talk hosted by a local organization like a birding group, nature center, museum, land trust, Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, etc. Here are some topic ideas:
 - In the spring, share alternatives to invasive plants for gardening
 - In the summer, offer advice on removal, or talk about the virtues of regional plants in the landscape
 - In the fall, share strategies for creating a management plan, or a talk on impacts to hunting
 - Anytime, give a talk on how to identify common invasive plants, human health impacts (parsnip rash, ticks in barberry, etc.)
- Work with local scout or school groups
 - Afterschool activities, Network has lots of lesson plans available for fun interactive activities (see the Terrestrial Plant Outreach Kit!)
 - Can you help a local scouting troupe create a new badge for restoration work? Host a pull invasives event to help them earn that new badge! (Check out Burlington Intervale’s Have a Heart Pull a Weed event)
- Hold a mapping workshop to teach community members how to use iNaturalist
 - Have a town wide competition to see who can map the most invasive plants
- Go to local fish derby’s or other outdoor recreation events and offer to have a table or workshop on invasive plants, and speak on how they impact that activity, and what simple steps everyone can take to help out.
- Get creative and create your own opportunities to talk with the public about invasive plants

Have an idea not listed? Describe it below and make sure to share with the larger group!
