Educating islanders about invasive plant effects

By Dotti Farrington

Jamestown Conservation Commissioners last month decided to develop a brochure for homeowners to be able to identify and to remove invasive plants from their properties. The educational pamphlet will supplement the commission's effort to identify and control invasive plants on town properties and along island roadsides.

Some 77 different plants at Beavertail, Fort Wetherill and Fort Getty Parks were identified in 2005 and 2006 by researchers Lisa Gould and Meg Dyer for the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England. Jamestown commissioner Cathy Roheim reported that some patches of plants have reached stages of concern.

The local conservationists this summer launched work to make a plan to bring the invasives under control. They said that environmental specialists generally concede it may be impossible to eliminate most invasives, but efforts to limit growth and problems can be successful.

Commissioners here also reported that invasive trees at the North Pond Reservoir grounds have reached proportions of concern and efforts are being made with the town Water and Public Works Departments, and the Tree Committee, to try to curtail their continued spread.

Chairman Christopher Powell said the board will need to find and apply for funds to print the homeowners' publication. Other commissioners said area organizations have data about problem plants and the information will be helpful in developing a guide specifically for Jamestown.

"We need to tell residents about the problems so they will know what is not wanted in their yards," Roheim commented. 'We need to give them information so they will know what not to plant and what to remove."

Jamestown's commissioners launched control of invasive plants in July as one of several multiple year goals they set for themselves.

Powell and Commissioner Pat Driscoll raised concerns about reports of invasive trees being identified on the island. "It's important that they be removed before the species takes over," Driscoll said.

Commissioner Jennifer Talancy identified the Norway Maple as a significant threat to elm, ash and black cherry trees by overshading those species. "If we don't act now to stop its spread, Jamestown woods could become mono-culture and ugly," she commented.

Knotweed targeted

Talancy also spoke at length about Japanese knotweed in July. She reported the knotweed apparently was imported and planted about 20 years ago as a screening plant at West Reach Estates and is spreading to neighboring woods, including town-owned property on North Main Road. She suggested the invasive plant could not be eradicated, but could be controlled.

The knotweed chokes out native plants, and can be problematic in numerous ways. It spreads quickly to form dense thickets that exclude native species and are of little value to wildlife, leading to it being described as an environmental weed. Seasonally, the plant leaves a mass of dead stems that further inhibits native plant regeneration and leaves land vulnerable to erosion and flooding.

The knotweed invades ecologically valuable wetland habitats. Common names include: Japanese or Mexican bamboo, Japanese fleece flower, donkey or Sally rhubarb, German sausage, and pea-shooter plant.

Talancy is working to collect data about the knotweed, especially about ways individuals and the town can best control it.

Commissioners are gathering data, including photos, about all undesirable plants being found in Jamestown, to develop into an education project. The information will be used to let property owners know what can be done, and to encourage interest in developing a volunteer corps to otherwise cope with the invasive plants.

Generic data

Invasive plants are most frequently known as, and sometimes dismissed, as weeds, but those concerned by unwanted growth also call them introduced species, non-indigenous plants, non-native and alien species, and noxious or exotic growths.

They harm the habitats they invade economically, environmentally or ecologically, usually by choking out desirable, native plants. Some non-native plants have not caused damage, but most do overtake their habitats. Environmentalists say it often takes 20 years or more to control a growth that has taken over an area.

All species compete to survive, but invasive species appear to have specific traits or combinations of specific traits that allow them to outcompete native species, specialists report. Common invasive species traits include fast growth, rapid reproduction, high dispersal rates, ability to adapt to suit current conditions, and tolerance of a wide range of environmental conditions, among other characteristics.

An introduced species might become invasive if it can out-compete native species for resources such as nutrients, light, physical space, water or food, it was explained. Invasive species often coexist with native species for an extended time and gradually the superior competitive ability of an invasive species becomes apparent when its population grows larger and denser.

Biological species invasions alter ecological systems in a multitude of ways. Land clearing and human habitation put significant pressure on local species and disturbed habitat is often prone to invasions that can have adverse effects on local ecosystems, changing ecosystem functions, environmental sources explain. Invasive species can change the functions of ecosystems. Harmful effects of hybridization have led to a decline and even extinction of native species.

Police Log

Breaking and entering charged

Two Newport juveniles were charged Oct. 30 with breaking and entering a home on Lincoln Street after neighbors witnessed them climbing in a window. The two were held at the Rhode Island Boys Training School and were taken to Newport Family Court on Oct. 31 for arraignment.

Expired license charged

Antonio Spetrini Mathieu, 20, of Providence was charged Oct. 30 with driving with an expired license after police stopped him on North Main Road for suspicious behavior, police said.

He was not held and a pre-trial hearing was scheduled for Nov. 16 at Newport District Court according to police.

Warrant violation charged

Kyjaun Taylor, 19, of Providence was charged with a bench warrant violation after police stopped his car on North Main Road for suspicious behavior, police said.

Taylor was held at the police station and was arraigned the next morning at Newport District Court, according to police.

Marijuana possession charged

Tracy Walsh, 26, of North Kingstown was charged Nov. 3 with first offense possession of marijuana after police detained her on Narragansett Avenue for disorderly conduct, police said.

According to police, Walsh was held at the police station where she was arraigned and a pre-trial hearing was scheduled for Nov. 16 at Newport District Court.

Drunk driving charge

Luke E. Leblanc, 28, of Groton, Conn. was charged Nov. 4 with first offense drunk driving after he was stopped on Route 138 West for erratic driving, according to police.

Leblanc was held at the police station overnight where he was arraigned and a pre-trial hearing was scheduled for Nov. 16 at Newport District Court, police said.

New website for band launched

The Jamestown Community Band has launched a website to keep fans and band members up to date. They will also use the site to help recruit new band members.

Bob Saunders will serve as the Webmaster.

The site has concert and rehearsal schedules, music planned for future concerts, information about the music director and band members, photos of past concerts and recent news about the band. People interested in joining the band will find details about requirements and band policies.

Fans can find the site at jamestownri.com/jcband. The next concert is the Holiday Concert scheduled for Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. in the Holy Ghost Hall.

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sweet berry FARM

Order Deadline is Friday, November 16th

Order Your Fresh Helger's Farm Turkey!

Thanksgiving Menu 2007

Farm & Market Open until New Year's Eve

DAILY 8:30 ~ 6:00

Thanksgiving Day: Open until Noon

SOUPS (by the quart: serves up to 4)

Madras Curry Pumpkin.....8.00

New England Clam Chowder.....10.00

NIBBLES

Baked Brie en Croute , 8 oz

With Cranberry Nut Chutney.....12

With Sundried Tomato, Pesto, Pine nuts....12

Hot Crab Dip 2.5 cups

with Crostini Crackers.....14

Hot Artichoke and Gorgonzola Dip 2.5 cups

with Crackers.....10

ENTREES

	Serves 4	Serves 8
Butternut Squash Lasagne		
~ Prepared with Prosciutto	26	49
~ Prepared without Prosciutto	24	45
Stuffed Roast Pork	28	55
With Apples, Walnuts, Spinach & Goat Cheese		
Fresh Helgers Farm Roasted Turkey, Sliced	3 lbs~28	6 lbs~55
Baked Macaroni & Cheese	24	45
With Ham and Tomatoes		

STUFFING (2 quarts 4 Servings)

Traditional Herb.....12

Apple & Sausage.....14

Oyster.....18

DINNER ROLLS

One Dozen Freshly Baked Rolls.....6

GRAVY (by the quart)

Rich Savory Turkey Gravy.....8

CRANBERRY SAUCE (per pint)

Jellied or Whole Berry.....5

SIDES (serves 4)

Winter Squash Mash 1 qt.....9

With Thyme, Chives

Spinach w/Cream, Garlic and Parmesan 1 qt...9

Green Beans Almondine 1.25 lbs.....16

Glazed Baby Carrots 1 qt.....10

With Orange, Ginger, Parsley Butter

Creamed Onions 1 qt.....10

Roasted Seasonal Vegetables 1 qt.....10

Root Vegetables Bathed in Cream 1 qt.....10

Candied Sweet Potatoes 1 qt.....10

With Marshmallow and Chopped Pecans

Garlic Smashed Aquidneck Island Potatoes 2 qts...9

Traditional Mashed Potatoes 2 qts.....8

DESSERT

PIES (9" serves 6)

Pumpkin Pie.....13

Apple Pie.....17

Apple Cranberry.....17

Chocolate Pecan Pie.....17

Pecan Pie.....17

CRISPS (serves4)

Peach Raspberry Crisp.....10

Apple Crisp.....10

Blueberry Crisp.....12

Pumpkin Cheesecake

with Pecan Crust (serves10).....19

SUSANNA'S ICE CREAM

(per pint. approx 2 servings)

French Vanilla Bean.....8

Pumpkin.....8

Apple Cinnamon.....8

Pomegranate Sorbet.....9

(401) 847-3912

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