

The Mount Park Forest Restoration

The Problem—Invasive English Ivy

What's not to like?

An easy to grow ground cover that rarely gets any bugs or disease; Grows with little water and stays green year-round.

The problem - it's too easy to grow. English ivy (*Hedera helix*) moves out of gardens and invades nearby parks, forests, and other natural areas. Left unchecked, it can create "ivy deserts" - sections of solid ivy where nothing else grows.

- Dense growth smothers native plants
- Covered tree branches can not leaf-out; trees slowly die
- Excess weight makes trees prone to blowing over during storms
- Ivy harbors bacterial leaf scorch- a disease that threatens native elms, oaks and maples.
- Berries on mature vines can be poisonous to native song birds
- Shallow roots make ivy a poor soil stabilizer-resulting in erosion
- Ivy's thick mat-like roots are good hide-outs for rodents
- Water that pools under leaves is ideal for breeding mosquitos.



The Solution

1) Control with Grazing Green Goats

- ⇒ Goats handle terrain hard for humans or motorized equipment to reach
- ⇒ Nature's lawnmowers - used for thousands of years to curb/control growth of weeds
- ⇒ Work round-the-clock, clearing everything up to seven feet high
- ⇒ Added benefit—fertilize as they work thinning the ivy carpet



2) Kill the Ivy using Herbicide Treatment

- ⇒ Reward (Diquat dibromide) and Ranger -Pro (glyphosate) mixed with surfactant
- ⇒ Because of the initial goat control, a more targeted spray was achieved using less chemical.

3) Replant with Native Species

- ⇒ 2,000 native trees and shrubs were planted to restore the understory of the forest.
- ⇒ 70-lbs of native understory seeds (perennials) were broadcast to reestablish a healthy forest ground cover.



The Results

- A Plant Stewardship Survey (May 2015) of the restoration area showed:
- ⇒ English Ivy was significantly reduced, but not completely eliminated. A long term stewardship program will be needed to monitor and remove remaining ivy and other invasives.
 - ⇒ The 18 different tree / shrub species planted (Fall 2015) were thriving. Plants (seeded Spring 2015) had not yet sprouted.
 - ⇒ The index score for the restoration area (lower forest) placed it as a "Quality Natural Area," although still impacted by invasive species. The upper forest, not impacted by ivy, showed a significantly higher rating.

Taken as a whole, the Mount represents a significant native habitat providing a refuge for plants and animals, and a green space for the neighborhood.



Recovering understory native plants

What You Can Do

Remove Ivy from Your Yard

Remove ivy from tree trunk. Free a 12-inch section completely around the trunk using pruners or loppers. Ivy dangling on the tree will eventually dry up and fall down.

Pull ivy from a 3-6 foot circle around the tree root, pulling as many roots as you can.

Cautiously dispose of the ivy. It re-sprouts easily! Either dispose of it with regular township brush pickup, or bag it in plastic until stems are dead before composting it.

Replant with Native Groundcovers

Suggestions: Wild Ginger, Mayapple, Partridge-Berry, Foamflower, Creeping Phlox, Wintergreen, Allegheny (or native) Pachysandra, Bearberry, Asters, and Christmas Fern (Evergreen).

Help with Mount Restoration Effort

To help with continued effort on the Mount, contact Mt Holly Township to contact Environmental Committee.

This project was made possible by a \$20,000 Sustainable Jersey 2013 Small Grant Award to the Mt Holly Environmental Committee/Green Team. Consulting on the project were staff from the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team; New Jersey Tree Foundation; and Bruce Barbour (Rutgers University). Contractors included Grazing Green Goats (Hummelstown, Pa) for the goats and Delaware Spray Company (Hainesport, NJ) for the herbicide spraying. The EAC/GT would like to thank the many volunteers that helped with the goat herding and tree planting, whose time was invaluable to the success of the project. For more information contact the Mt Holly township.