

by Christopher Evans and David Moorhead, The University of Georgia and Georgia EPPC



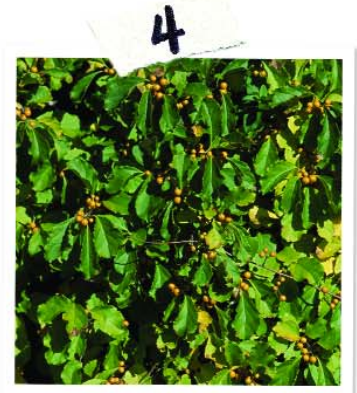
Japanese climbing fern
(Lygodium japonicum)



cogongrass
(Imperata cylindrica)



garlic mustard
(Alliaria petiolata)



Oriental bittersweet
(Celastrus orbiculatus)

Four invasive plant species, generally unknown to the public, are posing significant threats to the Georgia landscape and have a high potential to become widespread if left unchecked. The Georgia EPPC has sponsored several workshops and field days to highlight these and other invasive plant species, raise awareness of the problem and help equip participants to deal with the emerging threats.

On September 25, 2004 the Georgia EPPC hosted its first “Invasive Plant Control Workshop” in Griffin. This workshop focused on identification and control of invasive species in the Piedmont region of Georgia. Fifty-four people from a variety of occupations attended this meeting. Oriental bittersweet was highlighted as an emerging pest, both in the piedmont and mountain regions of Georgia. The workshop familiarized participants with the problem of Oriental bittersweet and equipped them to identify and control this new threat.

A similar event was held on April 13, 2005 in Tifton. This workshop focused on identification and control of Japanese climbing fern and cogongrass, two new threats to the coastal plain, as well as other common invasive plants. Both natural resource professionals and interested landowners attended, 43 in all. Participants visited a Japanese climbing fern infestation site that is currently under an eradication program.

A workshop focusing on invasive species of the Atlanta area is being planned for September 2005. Garlic mustard and Oriental bittersweet will be highlighted as emerging pests in need



PHOTO BY CONNIE GRAY, GA-EPPC

of control. On June 4, 2005, 33 volunteers helped control the garlic mustard on Kennesaw Mountain during a volunteer workday, resulting in the removal of over 100 large garbage bags filled with garlic mustard plants. The managers at Kennesaw plan to use similar volunteer events along with other control techniques within an intensive eradication program.

A cogongrass field tour was held specifically for University Extension, Georgia Forestry Commission, and Georgia

1. Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*) is being found throughout the coastal plain and southern piedmont regions of Georgia. While this plant has been in Georgia for quite a while, the population now seems to be spreading at an alarming rate. Photo by: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org; **2.** Infestations of **cogongrass** (*Imperata cylindrica*), a Federal Noxious Weed, have been found in eight counties in southern Georgia. Photo by: Charles T. Bryson, USDA ARS, www.forestryimages.org; **3.** The only known infestation of **garlic mustard** (*Alliaria petiolata*) in Georgia is at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield, north of Marietta. Garlic mustard was introduced into the area sometime in the mid-1980s. The infestation is actively spreading and covers several acres near the top of Kennesaw Mountain. Photo by: Chris Evans, University of Georgia, www.forestryimages.org; **4. Oriental bittersweet** (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), long a problem in states to the north, is being found more frequently in northern Georgia. Photo by: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org

Department of Natural Resources professionals by the University of Georgia Bugwood Network. The field tour took place in Mitchell County on March 29 with 58 people attending. Topics included identification and ecology of cogongrass and the importance of reporting any suspected infestations. The day ended with a tour of a pine stand infested with cogongrass.

In addition to workshops and field days, Georgia EPPC is sponsoring the printing and distribution of pest alert fliers that detail identification and control of each of these species. For more information on these invasive species, visit www.invasive.org. For specific information on cogongrass, visit www.cogongrass.org. To find out about invasive species in Georgia or the Georgia EPPC, please visit www.gaepcc.org.

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Garlic mustard before (left) and after removal on Kennesaw Mountain.

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