Invasive Species

An Educational Program of the Environmental Interpretive Center at the University of Michigan – Dearborn

Teacher Information

Program Length, Season of Activity, and Appropriate Grade Levels

- The program lasts 1 ½ to 4 ½ hours, and can be adapted to suit the needs of your group.
- Program is offered: April through November.
- Appropriate Grade Levels 6-12.

Program Description and Activities

In this program we observe a host of local invasive plant and animal species, and explore their negative impacts on habitats, food webs, biological diversity, soils, and more.

Your students will be engaged in a multifaceted program experience that may include:

- Investigating examples of local invasive plant or animal species and their impacts on the quality of habitat in our Natural Areas. Likely invasive species that we will study include garlic mustard, emerald ash borer, common buckthorn, and Amur honeysuckle.
- Differentiating between native, non-native, and invasive plant and animal species.
- Exploring the influence of human activity in the introduction and spread of local invasive species.
- Observing evidence of healthy ecological interrelationships between local native plants and animals.
- Investigating the detrimental impacts of local invasive species on the biological diversity within a forest community.
- Taking part in an invasive species removal activity. This tangible habitat preservation effort will reveal some of the challenges, frustrations, and joys involved in managing for healthy wildlife communities.
- Developing a sense of time and place by understanding how human activities have changed plant and animal communities over time.
- Discussing how human decision-making has played a significant role in the character and quality of habitat now present in our campus Natural Areas.
- Touring the established native plant landscape and rain gardens around the Center to explore how landscaping with native plants can help promote local biological diversity, protect water quality, and maintain soil health.
- Discussing how the plants we choose for our residential landscapes and gardens can either diminish or help sustain biological diversity.