



Monroe County
Identify and Reduce Invasive Species

Organize Your Neighborhood to Control Invasive Plants!



The native rough blazing star is an important pollinator plant.
Photo by K. Board

"Your small plot is connected to other plots, which are connected to others and others and others. Collectively they are North America. Changing the plant base of all of suburbia is quite an undertaking, but all you have to worry about is your eighth of an acre. Planting the back and side borders of your lot will provide more habitat than you might think, especially if you can get your neighbors to do the same." Douglas Tallamy from his book *Bringing Nature Home* page 280.

MC-IRIS (Monroe County - Identify and Remove Invasive Species) is dedicated to educating Monroe County citizens about invasive species and how they are contributing to the rapid decline of native plant and animal diversity. MC-IRIS can help your neighborhood to learn more about removing invasive plants.

Ready to Start Organizing?

- ◆ Start by identifying neighbors who already know about invasive plant problems, those open to learning, and those interested in nature.
- ◆ Once you have a core group, use your neighborhood's email Listserv, Next door, or Face Book page to communicate with all your neighbors.
- ◆ Emphasize the positive – invasive plants need to be controlled to let native plants thrive, which helps pollinators and other wildlife.
 - ◇ By email, or in person, offer to share your native plants and seeds.
 - ◇ Set up a mini workshop in your garden to pot seeds- have some potting soil on hand, empty pots and native seeds.
 - ◇ Let people know they can drop off plastic plant pots for you to reuse, or let them know you have extra mulch, or spare native plants to share.
 - ◇ Got gardening tools? Share them, or ask if someone has something you can borrow.
 - ◇ Share excited updates about how many Monarch butterflies you have seen. Ask if others can help you identify a bird you've noticed.
 - ◇ People love to help and want to be involved – give them the opportunity!



Ready to Take Action?

- ◆ Email your neighbors and ask who might be interested in attending a neighborhood work day to learn more about invasive plant identification and control.
- ◆ Once you have at least 10 neighbors interested, contact MC-IRIS by emailing mciris2010@gmail.com about your interest in setting up a work day. This is typically a two hour demonstration to learn how to identify invasive species and the various methods for their removal.
- ◆ Let your neighbors know the time and ask them to bring some tools, gloves, hat and water bottle – keep it simple. Remind them again a few days before your event date.
- ◆ Consider borrowing a weed wrench or backpack sprayer for your event through the Control Tool Loan program – details at <http://mc-iris.org/control-tool-loan-program.html>.
- ◆ Gather with your neighbors at the work day and enjoy learning and asking questions.
- ◆ Take “before and after” photos of control areas and share them with your neighbors.
- ◆ Follow up is important- keep the momentum going by self-organizing a work day every quarter, or more frequently.
- ◆ Involve a student group, neighborhood kids, Scout Group, or science club to help out on a work day and to help you track your efforts.
- ◆ Spread the word - share this information with neighborhoods and property owners that border your neighborhood.



Native purple coneflower and black-eyed Susans. Photo by E. Jacquart

Resources

Tallamy, D. W. (2009). Bringing nature home: how you can sustain wildlife with native plants. Portland: Timber Press.

Removing invasive species can seem like a big project.... And sometimes it is. So remember to tackle what you can, involve other people, keep learning and sharing, and replace your invasive species with native plants as you can and are able.

For more information, see mc-iris.org