



Invasive Japanese Hedge Parsley has exploded throughout local natural areas over the last 10 years.

THIS ISSUE

Sunday, August 10 / Turtles in Trouble
Coffee Break, August 29
Around the State in August
Do the Right Thing: MLCV Interview,
Goodbye to Twix bars!

A Summer-Blooming Invasive Clogs Road Sides & Natural Areas

Move over, Garlic Mustard, Dame's Rocket, Oriental Bittersweet, Amur Honeysuckle and other invasive alien plants wreaking havoc on many area woodland ecosystems. A new neighbor has joined your company. Introducing Japanese Hedge Parsley.

Despite the fact that I had misidentified it, I first noticed a single Japanese Hedge Parsley in a ditch up the road from our house in the early 2000s. I was leading a botany day camp for young teens, the focus of which was to identify as many trees, shrubs, vines, wildflowers, grasses and sedges as we could in a 4-day span. I simply told them the species that I knew pointing out the telltale characteristics of each, but many more, like this, required the aid of a field guide.

When we came across this new, somewhat carrot-like species, we pulled out our *Peterson Guide to Wildflowers of Northeastern/Northcentral North America* (Copyright 1966), and our *Newcomb's Wildflower Guide of Northeastern & Northcentral North America* (Copyright 1977). We had narrowed it down to a species of parsley. Each field guide, however, only featured a couple, the closest of which was called Hemlock Parsley. (Eventually, internet browsing revealed its true identity.)



Wild Carrot is topped by a much larger disk of florets.



Leaves of Japanese Hedge Parsley (left) and Wild Carrot.

Several years later I found a few among the overgrowth near the road along the edge of our property. A few more in the growth abutting the ag field along the back edge of the property. Little did I realize the latent exponential explosion about to besiege our acreage. So far this summer, I've pulled thousands – enough to put a marginal dent in their presence, but there is still a long way to go, AND a deadline, just to keep the pressure on.

Like Garlic Mustard which grows rapidly in the spring, flowers, then drops seed in June, Japanese Hedge Parsley (from now on, JHP, for brevity) imposes a deadline, after which pulling any more becomes a waste of time. Throughout the summer the sense of urgency required to eradicate it combined with a healthy dose of attitude can transform the effort into a bona fide competition: The Pulling Race. Now, that would make for *real* “reality” TV!

Both plants are biennials. A low rosette of leaves grows the first year. The reproductive stalk grows the second year, flowering, then producing seeds. Once the seeds dry they fall to the ground, and the plant desiccates and dies. The Garlic Mustard's seed-drop/pulling deadline is around late June in most years. JHP is a July bloomer. The tiny, ovate, burry seeds develop by the end of the month, then, either begin to drop to the ground, adhere to the hair or clothes of large passing mammals, get blown down the road by passing cars, or get stuck to the wheels of farm machinery. During the flowering stage we just drop the plants where we pull them. However, once the seeds develop, we haul bundles of it to our fire pit for burning.

Pay attention on any rural roadsides over the next week or two. Along some stretches, the roadside looks whitewashed! However, later in August when the flowering has progressed to seeding, JHP becomes much less noticeable to a passing motorist.



The ditch across the road just north of us is whitewashed with thousands of small umbels of JHP. Taking a weed-whacker to the tops before seeding is also effective.



Once seeds develop, Japanese Hedge Parsley can't be just pulled and dropped. We pull and burn.

Over the years, we've noticed a bit of deer-browse on JHP, but not nearly enough to have an effect on its density. Outside of flower-pollinators in the form of small bees and flies, herbivorous insect activity appears non-existent.

So, here it is! A springboard to your awareness of JHP on your property, in parks, along roadsides and anywhere else outdoors. Most plants are pulled by the root with minimal effort. We'll show you some, as well as the other invasive species on our property during Sunday, August 10 open hours. You can also arrange a special appointment here almost any time.

This is one more way to do something beneficial For the quality of a natural environment under siege, but a time-sensitive one. Ready, set... pull!

-Jim McGrath



Turtles in Trouble

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

Doors open from 1 to 5pm. Admission \$5/person.

Of Michigan's ten species of turtles, four have become rare enough to warrant state-protected status. Yet, due to a lack of broad base education the vast majority of citizens would be hard-pressed to name these species, much less identify them if they were encountered in the wild.

At 2pm, we will present *Michigan Turtles in Trouble*. Beautiful Powerpoint images and a complete collection of live specimens are used to enhance your knowledge, and arm you with the ability to give them a fighting chance. Learn the four major threats, directly related to our activities on the landscape, that jeopardize the future of all turtle populations. Specific discussion of the habitat, behavior and ecology of the four protected species - Blanding's, Wood, Eastern Box and Spotted turtles – sheds light on the collective plight facing all of them.

At the presentation's conclusion, participants have the option of driving or carpooling to McCormick Park, next to the Red Cedar River in Williamston for a quick 30-minutes of guided, wild turtle-watching. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will have a spotting scope along to allow for extra-close views of up to four species.

Learn to identify all ten species found in the state right out our back door as they swim in three pools and roam in a pen at your feet. Our staff can give you opportunities to feed them as well. Before, during or after the presentation, staff is also on hand to guide you through our highly interactive zoo of Michigan-specific snakes, frogs and salamanders.

Take a guided walk around the yard to search for a host of well-camouflaged, newly-metamorphosed, tiny tree frogs, spring peepers, wood frogs and toads. Catch insects to feed to frogs and toads in our aquariums. We aim to help participants of all ages make the very most of their visit.



Find out why the habitat and behavior of the protected Blanding's turtle puts it at a higher risk of being a road-kill victim than other turtle species.

Catch Us on Coffee Break Friday, August 29

Jim is scheduled to appear on Friday, August 29 at 9:15am, discussing our implementation of a new head-start program in schools for state-listed Wood Turtle hatchlings. The show airs weekdays from 9 to 10am on 89.7 FM. Listen live online at lcc.edu/radio/onair/ or watch it live (or later in the day at 6pm) online at lcc.edu/tv/watch. We'll post a reminder on our Facebook fan page.



Around the State in August



- ❖ ***Saturday, August 9: 10:30am. MI Frogs Presentation; Huron County Nature Center.***
- ❖ ***Saturday, August 16: 10:30am. MI Reptiles & Amphibians; Wabasis Lake Park Campground, Greenville.
12pm. Butterflies & Moths Presentation; Leila Arboretum Children's Garden, Battle Creek.***
- ❖ ***Sunday, August 17: 10am to 2pm. MI Snakes Exhibit; Williamston Farmers' Market.***
- ❖ ***Saturday, August 30: 2-5pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Exhibit; Ludington State Park.
7pm. MI Reptiles & Amphibians Presentation; Ludington SP.***

Introducing Do the Right Thing, Our Monthly Column Formerly Known as Climate Change Realist (CCR)

Why the change? We should have moved beyond unproductive debate and on to meaningful action years ago. Extreme climatic trends, driven by the machinery of our fossil-fuel-addicted, "consume-more" based economy, is as close to scientific certainty as it gets. A stubborn adherence to lifestyles in which we squander resources as if they are in infinite supply, in which we fill our air with carbon emissions as if our closed atmosphere extends infinitely into space, will be viewed by future generations as no less backward than our current view of the pre-Columbian presumption that the earth is flat.

Some inspiration and food for thought:

First, a link to a conversation between Matt Grocoff and Michigan League of Conservation Voters Executive Director, Lisa Wozniak that aired on WEMU radio last Friday. Grocoff spearheaded the restoration of an old house that became Michigan's first, and so far, only net-zero-energy building.

<http://wemu.org/post/1st-friday-focus-environment-net-zero-energy-buildings>

More about Michigan League of Conservation Voters: <http://www.michiganlcv.org/about-us>
MLCV has a new field office in Lansing. This start-up is sorely in need of volunteers. Contact them at rami.mlcv@gmail.com or at 735-620-8306. Tell them we told you!



Warning: If you love Twix bars... if you have a soft spot for certain brands of candy, cookies, crackers, pastries or pizza, reading further may permanently taint your ability to enjoy them!

We love them, too, but, until further notice no Twix in our house. That goes for a growing list of other yummy, mostly-candy, cookies and other snack foods, too, including Starburst, Cheez Its, Oreos and Red Baron pizza...

In last month's *CCR* we mentioned the Showtime series, *Years of Living Dangerously*. The first episode of this 9-part series is available to watch online at www.yearsoflivingdangerously.com. We urge you to watch it. When we did, we were surprised that we had never heard about the current rate of destruction of Indonesian rainforests largely to make way for plantations of the oil palm. The tree's product, palm oil, is in heavy demand especially in developed nations like the U.S., as a superfluous additive in many popular and heavily-consumed foods. Rainforests are the earth's natural CO2 filters, absorbing the gas and converting it into oxygen. Clearcutting and burning tropical rainforest is a one-two punch toward increasing atmospheric carbon concentration. The planet's CO2 filters are not only being burned, but turned into CO2 emitters, instead. All for "enhanced" flavor in our favorite candies and cookies, really?

Now that we know, we can't touch this stuff in good conscience. Grocery shopping trips have grown longer in recent weeks - each and every ingredient label perused for those two words. Wow, are there a lot! No wonder whole rainforests are being cleared for these trees. We've been turned unwittingly into palm oil junkies! Here are more: Pillsbury Dough Boy, say it ain't so! Milk Duds, Twizzlers, Skittles, Butterfinger, Milky Way, Special K Crisps and cereal bars, New York Texas Toast, Ramen Noodles. Many more to come!

How would these products taste with soy or olive oil substitutes? Our guess is we'd never tell the difference. Type "palm oil" into your favorite search engine for way more information, then, let the letter writing and Facebook alerts begin!

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