

Distinguishing between invasive plants from native lookalikes in late winter/early spring: a 1-day Workshop.

There are a number advantages to doing invasive plant control outside of the growing season, (e.g., no disturbance of breeding birds, student volunteers more available, less disturbance of native vegetation). But it requires more advanced field identification skills to avoid throwing native babies out with the bath water, when working at sites with a significant native plant component, e.g., especially, "early intervention" sites with intact natural communities. This workshop focuses on field identification of woody invasive plants in late winter/early spring, prime season for pulling invasives but a difficult time to identify many woody plants using guides and manuals, as many are somewhere between dormant and leaf-on state. The emphasis will be on distinguishing invasives from native species with which they co-occur and may be potentially confused, especially when in young/immature state (i.e., when they are most easily removed but hardest to identify with guides and manuals). The workshop will emphasize development and reinforcement of field identification skills *in situ*; and after a brief introductory classroom session inside, the rest of the day will be spent in the field. The workshop is designed for people already interested in, involved in, and/or doing hands-on invasive plant control, including land managers associated with land trusts, professionals looking to brush up on their skills, and private land owners managing their properties as natural areas. The venue is presently planned to be White Memorial Conservation Center, a 4000-acre preserve in Litchfield, CT, and at least one riparian site in Torrington, CT. The venue may be relocated northward 20-30 miles, if we have an unusually warm early spring. The workshop will run from 08:30 to ~17:00. The running of the workshop is conditional upon a minimum enrollment of 15 people. Final decision as to whether or not the workshop will run will be made on April 3rd. Enrollment is limited to 20 people, so those who are sure they want to take the workshop should register as soon as possible to reserve their space. In the event of extremely unfavorable weather conditions for field work all or part of the day, all or part of the workshop will be changed into a lab/classroom session, using collected specimens.

Each participant should bring: a good quality hand lens with at least 10X magnification; a field notebook (preferably waterproof) and writing implement[s], bags for collecting specimens (2-gallon ziploc recommended); his/her choice of sun protection and insect repellent (black flies are a possibility); appropriate footwear for both cold mud and hiking up to 2 miles on not-very-rugged terrain; clothing that allows you to stand around for 5-10 minutes in chilly and/or wet weather conditions in sufficient comfort to concentrate on listening and taking notes.

This workshop is sponsored by Aton Forest Inc., P.O. Box 509, Norfolk, CT 06058

Instructor: Bill Moorhead, Consulting Field Botanist, 486 Torrington Rd, Litchfield, CT 06759.
Telephone: 860-567-4920. Email: whmoorhead@optonline.net.

Date & time: Saturday, April 10, 2010, 8:30 AM - ~5:00 PM.

Place: At this point, White Memorial Conservation Center, 80 Whitehall Rd, Litchfield, CT 06759. However, if we have a particularly warm late March/early April, the venue may be moved northward, i.e., to Aton Forest or possibly southwestern MA.

Accommodations and amenities: Lunch and liquid refreshments will be provided. Transportation to field sites beyond walking distance will be by convoy/car-pool in participants' vehicles.

Tuition: \$75.00. Payment is required in advance, by check or money order, to register for and reserve a space in the workshop. Checks should be made out to "Aton Forest Inc." and sent to Bill Moorhead at the address given above. Credit or debit card payment is not accepted (sorry). Enrollment will be on a first-come-first-served basis, and is limited to 20. As the running of the workshop is conditional upon a minimum enrollment, the final decision as to whether the workshop will be run will be made on April 3rd. If the course is cancelled, tuition payments will be refunded by mail, posted not later than April 5, 2010. A

registered participant may cancel and receive a full refund through April 2nd; if a registered participant cancels after that April 2nd, their tuition will not be refunded if his/her cancellation brings the class size below the 15 participant minimum.

Weather considerations: as noted above, the workshop will not be cancelled on account of severe weather, but all or a portion of the workshop may be changed to an in-door lab/classroom session, using fresh previously collected material.

For more information, contact Bill Moorhead (860-567-4920, whmoorhead@optonline.net) or John Anderson, Executive Director, Aton Forest Inc. (860-542-5125, contact@atonforest.org)