



Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Japanese Pachysandra

Pachysandra terminalis Sieb. & Zucc.



Photo: Jil Swearingen, National Park Service, www.invasive.org

Background:

This native of eastern Asia was brought to the U.S. as an ornamental groundcover. It is also known as Japanese spurge and Chinese fever vine.

Range:

This plant can be found in scattered locations throughout the Mid-Atlantic states, south to the Carolinas and west to Wisconsin. It is reported as invasive in PA, VA and DC.

Description:

This evergreen perennial groundcover can reach 12 inches in height and spread to form dense mats. The small (two to four inches in length) oval-shaped leaves alternate along the stem. Inconspicuous white flowers appear between March and April.



Photo: Jil Swearingen, National Park Service, www.invasive.org

Biology and Spread:

This plant reproduces vegetatively through underground stems and roots.

Habitat:

This plant escapes from cultivation and colonizes forest and meadow edges. It can grow in deep shade.

Ecological Threat:

Because this plant grows very quickly it can displace native vegetation and form a monoculture that provides little benefit to wildlife.



Photo: Jil Swearingen, National Park Service, www.invasive.org

How to Control this Species:

Hand pulling and controlled burning have been used successfully on this plant.

Pachysandra can also be controlled with several readily available herbicides, such as glyphosate. A pre-emergent herbicide can also be applied to the ground to kill the plants before they emerge. This may have less of an impact on desired native vegetation. Be sure to follow the label's instructions and all state herbicide requirements.

Native Alternatives:

Many versatile native ground covers are available:



Chris Evans, River to River CWMA
www.forestryimages.org



Joseph O'Brien, USDA Forest Service
www.forestryimages.org



W.D. Bransford
www.wildflower.org



Wendy VanDyk Evans
www.forestryimages.org

References:

USDA Forest Service *Weed of the Week* factsheet:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/japanese-pachysandra.pdf

Invasive Exotic Plant Pest Tutorial:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/japanese_pachysandra_M_C.htm

For More Information:

To learn more about invasive plants in Pennsylvania, here are some other useful resources:

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, National Park Service:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>

Invasive Plants Field and Reference Guide, U.S. Forest Service:

http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf