

Moving Forward

on the Wings of the Wetland in 2018

By J. Arleen Corson

Moving forward pushing seven decades may not be as hard as you imagine. There are middle school teenagers, full of life, collage students, the millennials, our kids age, kids middle life, early retirement and all the rest!

Become a teacher. Take one flower or plant that you know by heart, and can identify it by its leaves, stalk, stem, blossom, anthers and even roots year after year, and teach it to some one else.

Read and join a plant identification group or Google about plants you don't quite understand and can't identify.

Keep a journal, write down now Harry bittercress, the first ephemeral growing. *Cardamine hirsute*. (you can skip the Greek if you like) A plant that is sweet, grows to blossom, seeds drop off and grows again if soil is good, but more than likely will need freezing and thawing all over again. It's native to North America and edible.. Post pictures and add recipes.

Consult some one that knows more than you do about horticulture There are many around. Some professionals in our area have shown a lot of interest in volunteering in our wetland. We are planning to use them as resources.

Invite your friends to see the wetland and show off your knowledge about what a wetland is all about. After all it used to be called a wet land. How times have changed, and why? I have two designated groups scheduled to come and hopefully the middle school students will be back.

Partner with some who want to volunteer or wants to share favors. The agriculture department at Wawasee High School will be partnering with our garden club this summer. We get weeds pulled and doing watering chores and they are receiving extra credit in some situations.

Invest in some resources such as horticulture books and magazines. Some magazines are actually free. Read!

The first wetland walk about, to survey the situation will be March 3, 2018 at 9:00 am. I hope to get all I print on the webpage thanks to Bernie. Naturally we will be looking for colonization of species, of course loosestrife and cattail at the top of the list. Bahahaha!

Our marking labels should indicate some strong colonies. Cress, Common Milkweed, Rice cutgrass, carex porcupine, Bur reed and Arrow head. We are strong enough in some colonies to share starts to those who want to enhance their lake front.



Living and Loving the Good Life

OUT HERE

Spring 2018



Lavender FARMING

For the McCloskey-Hilliker family, growing this fragrant herb made the most 'scents'

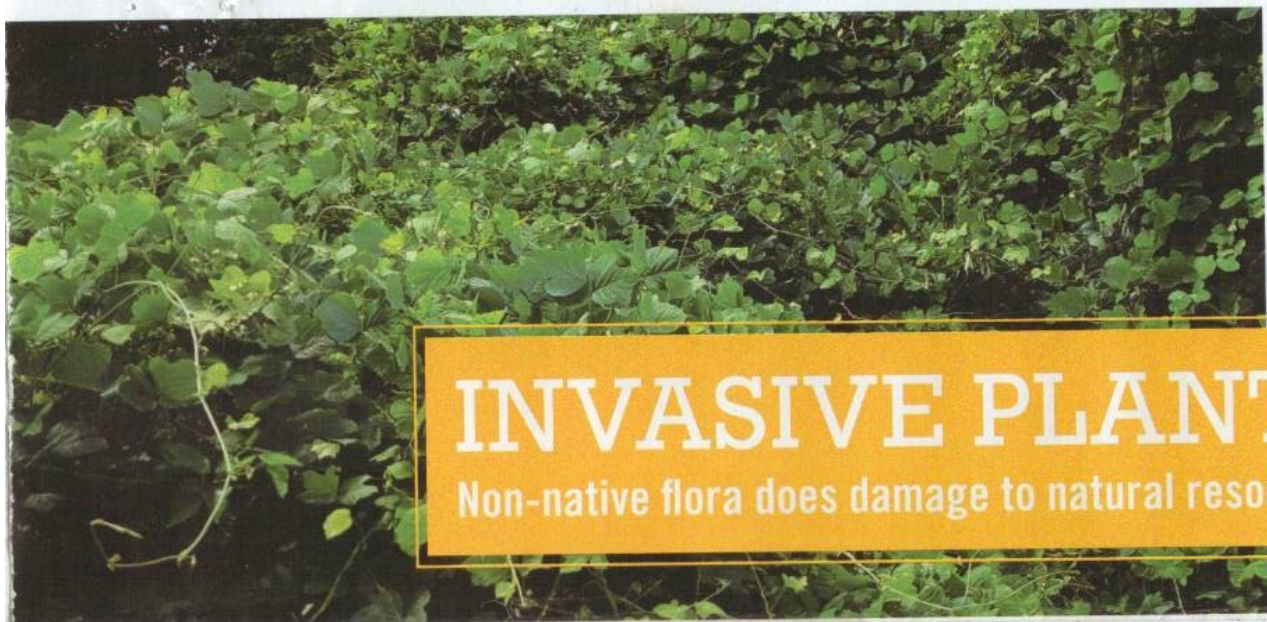
FINDING COMFORT IN
MINI THERAPY HORSES

START YOUR
EARLY SPRING GARDEN

EVOLVING AGRICULTURE BY
FARMING WITH DRONES

FREE

By T.L. De



INVASIVE PLANTS

Non-native flora does damage to natural resources

Invasive plants just might be the gangsters of horticulture.

They look for opportunities to get a foothold in the environment and, left unchallenged, can dominate their surroundings. Without a unified community effort, these intruders are difficult to control and nearly impossible to eradicate.

In the United States, invasive plants cause \$15 billion in damage each year, says Will Drews, a natural resource specialist with the Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District in Indiana.

Invasive plants are not necessarily weeds; they are non-native or exotic plants that are likely to cause harm to the ecology, economy, or human health.

“They are bullies and they take over. And the plants that we want to grow there can’t compete with them,” Drews says.

Some weeds might be a nuisance to farmers and ranchers, but if they are native to that geographic area, they are not invasive.

Insects, wildlife, and other environmental factors keep native plants in check, but invasive plants do not have natural predators to manage them.

“Our biggest concern with most of these plants is they just do too well in our environment and this affects the plant diversity in our forests and even in wetlands, prairies, and rangelands,” Drews says.

Sometimes, invasive plants are introduced to regions with the best of intentions.

Kudzu – the lush, green vine originally planted in the South to help control erosion – heavily and quickly blankets anything in its path. “It’s gone crazy,” Drews says. “It topples trees, climbs over everything.” Japanese Stiltgrass has put a stranglehold on woodlands in the Midwest. The dense carpet of grass prevents wildflowers, native grasses, and trees from reseeding.

“If a dense patch of Japanese Stiltgrass gets established we will have trouble with forest regeneration,” Drews says. “That will affect logging, timber, and recreational activities.”

Wildlife may suffer even if invasive plants are introduced for ornamental value.

People once thought Asian Bush Honeysuckle would provide a natural nesting area for birds while supplying plenty of bright red berries for food.

But the branches provide little protection from predators.

Also, the birds tend to eat too many of the berries, which do not provide the same nutritional benefits as native bushes.

“They are gobbling up candy instead of nuts and fruits,” Drews says.

Invasive plants pose problems across the country, which must be addressed locally, Drews says.

Landowners should ask local agriculture extension offices or soil and water conservation districts to help identify invasive plants and develop a plan to manage or eliminate them, he says.

“A lot of people may not know they have certain invasive species,” he says, adding that it’s important for neighbors to work together. Controlling invasive species on one piece of property won’t help much if surrounding landowners don’t do the same.

There may not be a single solution.

Herbicides alone may not be the answer because the chemicals could kill other plants, and burning doesn’t always destroy the plants or prevent its reseeding.

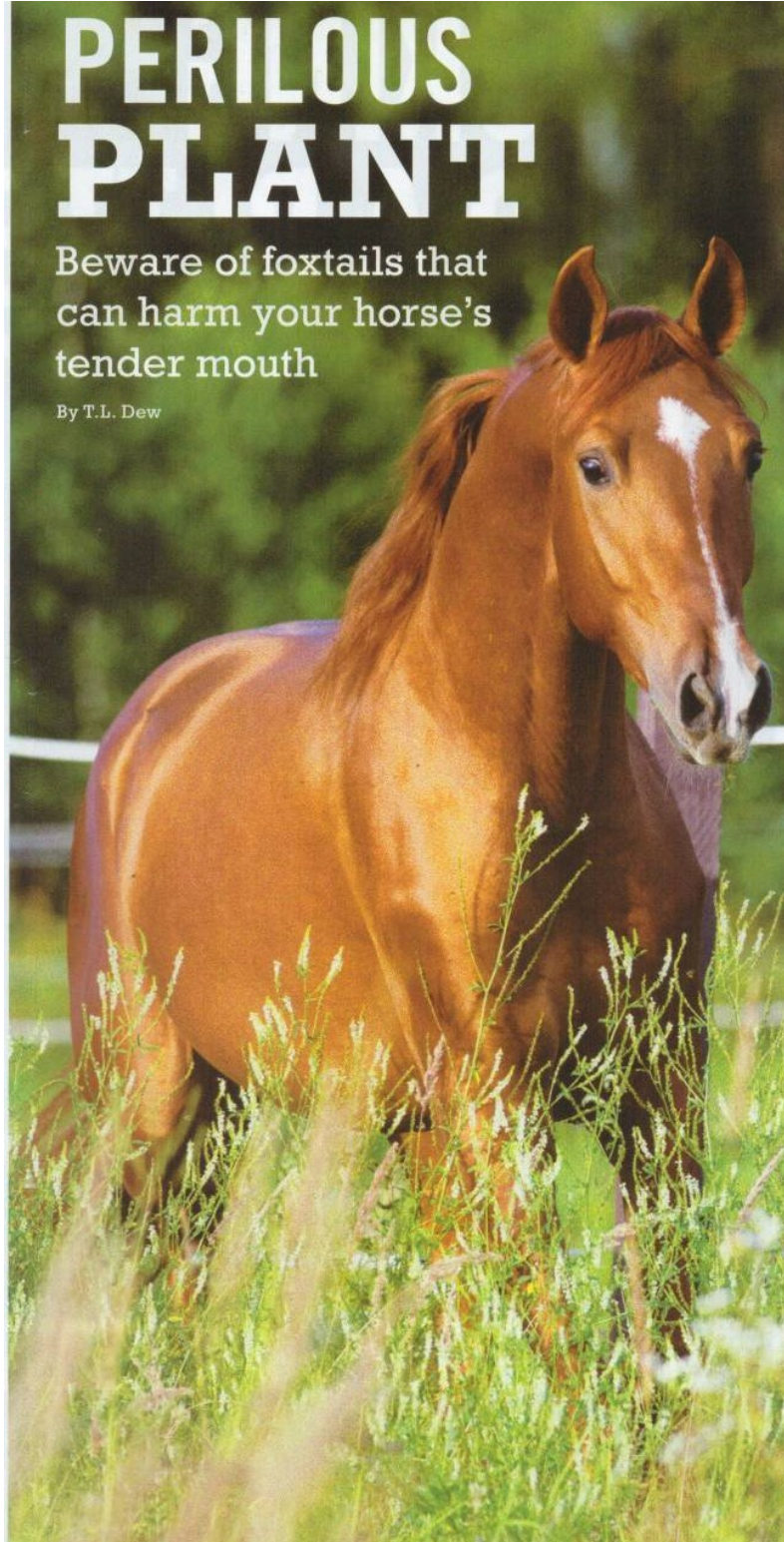
Drews usually recommends a combination of those solutions, along with manual removal, to take back the horticultural neighborhood.

T.L. Dew is a Tennessee writer.

PERILOUS PLANT

Beware of foxtails that
can harm your horse's
tender mouth

By T.L. Dew



Foxtail, those wispy, tall plants often seen swaying in the breeze in a sun-drenched pasture during late spring or early summer may look harmless enough, but they can harm your horse.

In fact, if your horse has lost interest in eating or begins losing weight, foxtail may be the culprit.

The perilous parts of the plant are the prickly, barbed bristles near the seed head that can become embedded inside the soft tissue of the horse's lips, tongue, and gums. They can cause blister-like sores that actually are mouth ulcers that, left untreated, can become quite serious and painful, says Dr. Jennie Ivey, an assistant professor and extension equine specialist at the University of Tennessee.

Occasionally, the bristles cause pain in the esophagus or stomach as they travel down the gastrointestinal tract. A veterinarian may need to be consulted.

"It's really when the seed head becomes mature," Ivey says.

Horse owners should regularly check the horses' mouths for the seed head bristles, which can easily be removed, Ivey says.

Left unchecked, a seed head boring into the horse's mouth can painfully fester and discourage the horse from eating.

Prevent horses from ingesting the foxtail seed heads by looking through hay bales before feeding, especially when a new supply of hay arrives, she advises.



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Reputable hay producers are aware of the foxtail concerns and practice good pasture management. However, foxtail can be difficult to eliminate.

“We don’t really have any herbicide to completely remove foxtail from the field,” Ivey says. And, no field can ever be 100 percent weed-free, she says.

Horse owners uncertain about the presence of foxtail in the hay they are feeding their animals, Ivey says, can always turn to their local agricultural extension office for help with pasture management and weed identification. ★

T.L. Dew is a Tennessee writer.

If your horse has lost interest in eating or begins losing weight, foxtail may be the culprit.

Instead, hay producers must rely on timely mowing of the pastures and cut down the foxtail before the seed head matures.