

# Fairfax Invasive Removal Alliance

Uniting Fairfax County residents to address the invasive plants crisis



# MISSION

FIRA is a grassroots all-volunteer organization that brings together homeowner, citizen, and condo associations to advocate for a healthier ecosystem in Fairfax County by saving trees through the removal of invasive plants and the planting of natives.



# FIRA FOUNDERS AND ORGANIZERS



Rekha Dolas



Ines  
Nedelcovic



Wendy Cohen

# Why do you think we spend so much time and energy on invasive plants?\*



UGA0016089

[Inspirational Video](#)

\*extra points if you can identify these nasties

# Two “special” water invasives



phragmites australis/common reed



two horned trapa//water chestnut



# What is an invasive plant?

An introduced plant that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration; and, whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

U.S. natives can be invasive in other parts of the U.S.

# Why Do Invasive Plants Proliferate?

Used by Landscapers and Homeowners because...



- Tolerate wide array of conditions
- Not palatable to deer or other critters
- Not eaten by our local insects
- Green up earlier in the spring, stays green longer in the fall
- Aggressive root systems and/or runners
- Produce large quantity of seeds
- Thrive on disturbed soil or edge environments
- Allelopathy: can inhibit growth of other plants around them
- Cheap to propagate

# PRETTY PROBLEM/HIGHLY AVAILABLE





Porcelain berry

P  
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R



90% of  
plant-eating  
insects are  
plant specialists



P  
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M

# COMPETING/INHOSPITABLE SPACE PROBLEM



# TREE KILLER PROBLEM





TREE SURVEYS



# STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES





Green Springs, Master Gardeners, Tree Rescuers, Master Naturalists, Plant NoVA Natives, Nature Forward, Fairfax County IMA program, Friends of ....., etc.

# ADVOCACY METHODS



**Building an impactful coalition of neighborhood associations to**

-  Interact with county supervisors & agencies: meetings and public hearings
-  Interact with state legislators: meetings and letter campaigns

# PRIORITY ASKS

- Create a vigorous public education campaign
- Develop the needed workforce
- Offer incentive programs for the owners of private properties, such as matching grants for communities to treat their common open space




# ADDITIONAL ASKS



- Leverage volunteer labor to maximize effectiveness
- Collaborate with other public entities such as VDOT, railroads, etc.
- Advocate for needed legislative changes at the state level
- Encourage nurseries to move away from the sale of invasive plants and boost native alternatives instead
- Find funding sources for County-owned spaces beyond taxpayers' money

# CURRENT CAMPAIGN



-  Service districts raise money “to provide additional, more complete or more timely services of government.” (VA Code 15.2-2400)
-  Invasive plants should be included in the list of powers of service districts
-  Working with the VA Invasive Plant Coalition, (VIPCC) we plan to push for legislation to change to VA Code, enabling jurisdictions like Fairfax County to set up an invasive plants service district

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## COALITON BUILDING:



Send FIRA information including our website address to



Your neighborhood association leader





Other residents of Fairfax County to send to their neighborhood association leaders

# HOW YOU CAN HELP

ADVOCACY: (stay tuned)



-  Contact your legislators in support of the bill(s) to amend the VA Code to include invasive plants
-  Contact your Fairfax County Supervisor and Chairman McKay in support of Fairfax County setting up an invasive plants service district

FIRA Website:

<https://www.firaadvocacy.com>



Follow us on FACEBOOK:

<https://tinyurl.com/mrxwf68y>

Questions?



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