



A THREATENED NATIVE HOME

TOP INVADERS ON THE TRAIL:



► **Japanese Knotweed**
(*Polygonum cuspidatum*) forms dense thickets that crowd out all other plants. On parts of the Mon River Trail, it has spread along and across the trail, making foot and bike travel difficult and creating a trail maintenance nightmare.



► **Tree-of-Heaven**
(*Ailanthus altissima*), also known as Chinese sumac, is a fast-growing tree and prolific seeder that can sprout new stems from its roots and spread its seeds by wind and water. Dense thickets crowd out native trees along rail trails. One tree reportedly can produce 325,000 seeds per year! Small trees can look like native sumacs, and larger trees resemble walnut trees.



► **Japanese Honeysuckle**
(*Lonicera japonica*) is a perennial vine that climbs and covers native vegetation, preventing light from reaching other plants. It blooms from late April into late autumn. Its vigorous roots can also help it spread and displace neighboring plants.

Learn more about native plants from the WV Native Plant Society and WV Division of Natural Resources

Native wildflower and tree populations of the Allegheny Mountains, a part of the Appalachians, have developed over expanses of geologic time. The native plants that grow in the Allegheny Mountains, including many that exist nowhere else, have been shaped by the mountainous temperate climates, elevation, and topography.

These forests face threats from introduced organisms—insects such as the gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*), which can kill oaks through repeated defoliation; diseases such as the chestnut blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*), which decimated American chestnut trees; and plants such as kudzu (*Pueraria montana*), a fast-growing vine that smothers native vegetation in the Southeastern United States. Invasive plant species now threaten the existence of native ecosystems as they compete with native species for sunlight, water, and space.

Invasive, non-native species flourish after people transport them across barriers they could not otherwise have overcome. The railroads that once traveled this corridor and boats on the river have helped spread these plant and insect invaders. West Virginia has more than 650 invasive species, many brought to the United States as ornamentals or as hitchhikers on airplanes, ships, and trains.

How You Can Help:

Minimize habitat disturbance in natural areas, reducing the chance for invasion by non-native species.

Clean equipment, boots, and gear between trips, or preferably before leaving an infested area. Make sure to remove all seeds and other plant parts.

Go native!

Garden with native plants.



Hemlock woolly adelgid infestation on Eastern hemlock.



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