

SUNY Oneonta Campus Invasive Plant Survey, Removal and Replacement Plan

College campuses encompass a variety of habitats subject to a high level of invasive plant introductions; from frequent soil disturbance during construction projects, and non-native horticultural plantings. At the same time, campus landscapes can become outdoor laboratories for invasive plant species research, education and control efforts. Last fall, students of Plant Ecology (BIOL 381) at SUNY Oneonta researched 24 invasive plants from the New York State list of Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species (6 NYCRR Part 575). The 250-acre campus is within the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) region, and the project was developed in cooperation with CRISP. Students were assigned portions of campus to survey, and many of the 20 invasive species located were horticultural plantings (e.g., Japanese Barberry, Burning Bush), but in several of the minimally managed woodlots they found extensive Norway Maple and Garlic Mustard in the understory. GPS locations were reported to the state online iMapInvasives dataset. Our current study expands the previous work to include ground-truthing of GPS locations and species identification. We are collaborating with our SUNY Oneonta Facilities Office to initiate an invasive plant removal and replacement plan that includes an outreach event to replace some of the invasive shrubs on campus with native species. One target species is the Japanese Barberry, which is prohibited for sale in New York State. Our plan will replace Japanese Barberry with suitable, deer resistant, native, and non-invasive shrubs over a period of years. To our knowledge, this project is the first full-campus invasive plant survey in the 64 campus SUNY system. We hope that our project will provide a successful template for invasive plant management, and encourage other SUNY campuses to become more sustainable by complying with 6 NYCRR Part 575.