

# Invasive Species

A big problem...  
but also  
an opportunity  
to make a *big*  
impact





# What are invasives?

- Non-native species (did not evolve to live here) that have no native barriers to reproduction and thriving.
  - Example: kudzu, "the vine that ate the south"
- They are the bullies of the natural world.
- They accelerate human-caused extinctions.
- But they are not "bad." They're just in the wrong place due to human domination of the planet.



# Why remove invasives?

- Invasives kill off native species, and it's a scary ripple effect.
  - Native fauna often cannot eat invasives
  - Native fauna often cannot live on/in invasives
- Humans have destroyed so much life. Now we each have an opportunity to save life.
  - And fill our lives with meaning and purpose.
  - And think more in tree time, than human time!



# Some thoughts on removing invasives

- If we can't win the "war" against invasives, we can at least win most battles.
  - Just because we can't defeat kudzu or wisteria, doesn't mean we can't stop them from killing trees.
- You can spend two hours in one day that will have an impact for *years* to come.
- You'll never have to go exercise in a gym again.



# My work with NC invasives

- Moved to Chapel Hill in September 2018 from Chicago.
  - Where I spent years battling buckthorn.
- Adopted Morgan Creek Greenway and Merritt's Pasture.
- Lead invasives removal at Brumley Nature Preserve
- Work with Town of Carrboro to organize volunteers to remove invasives on town properties
- Clear invasives from private properties

**Find property owners from public maps:**

<https://gis.orangecountync.gov/orangeNCGIS/>

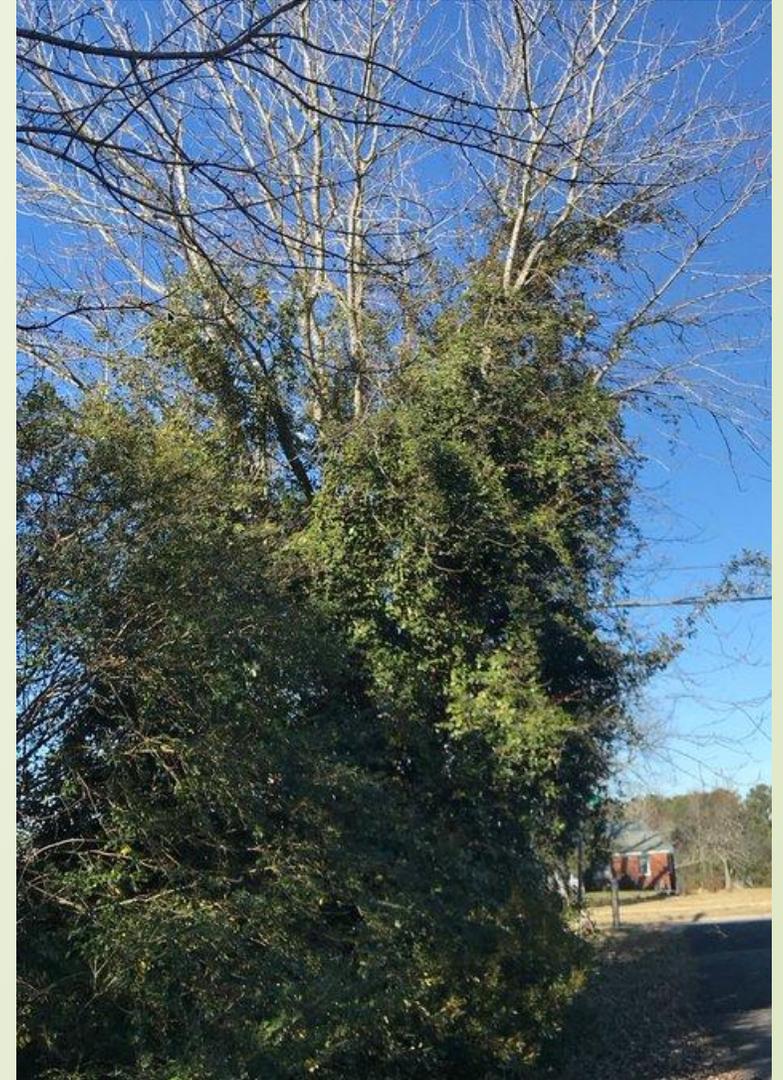


# Lessons, tips, celebrations

- Following slides offer what I've learned dealing with different species
  - Each has its own distinct ways of growing and optimal ways to remove them.
- Please keep in mind:
  - I am not a trained naturalist or arborist.
  - I am constantly learning new and better methods

# Thorny Olive (*Elaeagnus pungens*)

- ❑ With nasty long thorns, this olive grows vertically, easily reaching 20 feet up into trees, tangling into branches.
- ❑ Cut at the base, pull away from trees, use shears to cut upper growth so you can remove it if too tangled.



# Brumley Nature Preserve, along New Hope Church Road

Before



After



# Brumley Nature Preserve, along New Hope Church Road

Before



After



Before



After



**Yes, thorny olive really has thorns...and olives**





# Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

- Thorny shrub or small tree (thorns not as bad as thorny olive!)
- Spreads rapidly through forest understories.
- Chokes out next generation of saplings
- Hard to pull out unless very small
- Can remove with weed wrenches, also often possible to break off root base with foot.

# Carolina North

Healthy Forest



The autumn olive effect



# Carolina North



□ Good news: we can make a big dent on autumn olive!

# Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

Before



After





# Stilt Grass

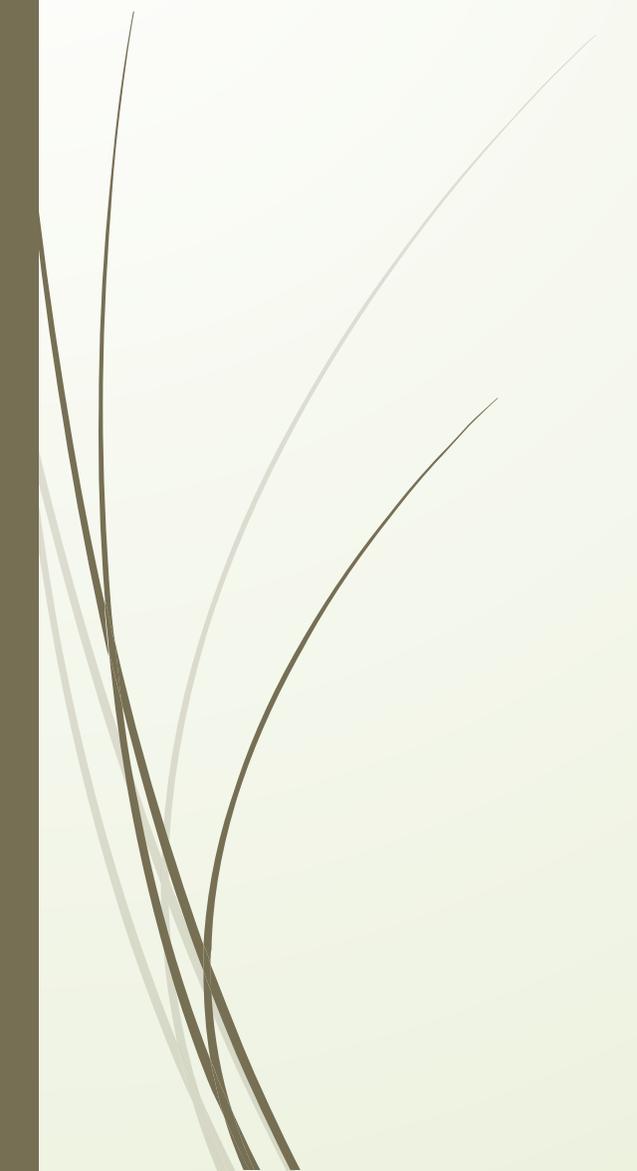








# Before and after at MLK Park





# Multiflora Rose (*rosa multiflora*)

- "A scrambling shrub climbing over other plants to a height of 3–5 m (9.8–16.4 ft), with stout stems with recurved prickles."
    - OK, that's very nicely phrased. My wording:  
**WATCH OUT FOR THOSE FISHHOOK THORNS!**
  - Spreads rapidly, overwhelms other shrubs and trees.
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# Careful, step by step removal



- Hard to overemphasize this with m. rose: if you don't want to experience lots of pain, plan out your removals.

# Twenty Foot Tall M. Rose at Brumley



# Tips for removing m. rose

- Whenever possible, cut at the base, and pull it out base first.
- Can often remove enormous shrubs intact this way,
- And avoid almost all the awful thorns



# Wisteria

- ❑ So beautiful, so fragrant, so deadly
- ❑ One of the worst tree-killers in our area!
- ❑ Vines are easy to cut, but after cutting, multiple new growths erupt (if you don't use additional control measures)



# Drive-by wisteria nightmares



# Dramatic, wonderful impacts!



# Wisteria is a tree choker!



# Chinese Holly





# Mahonia







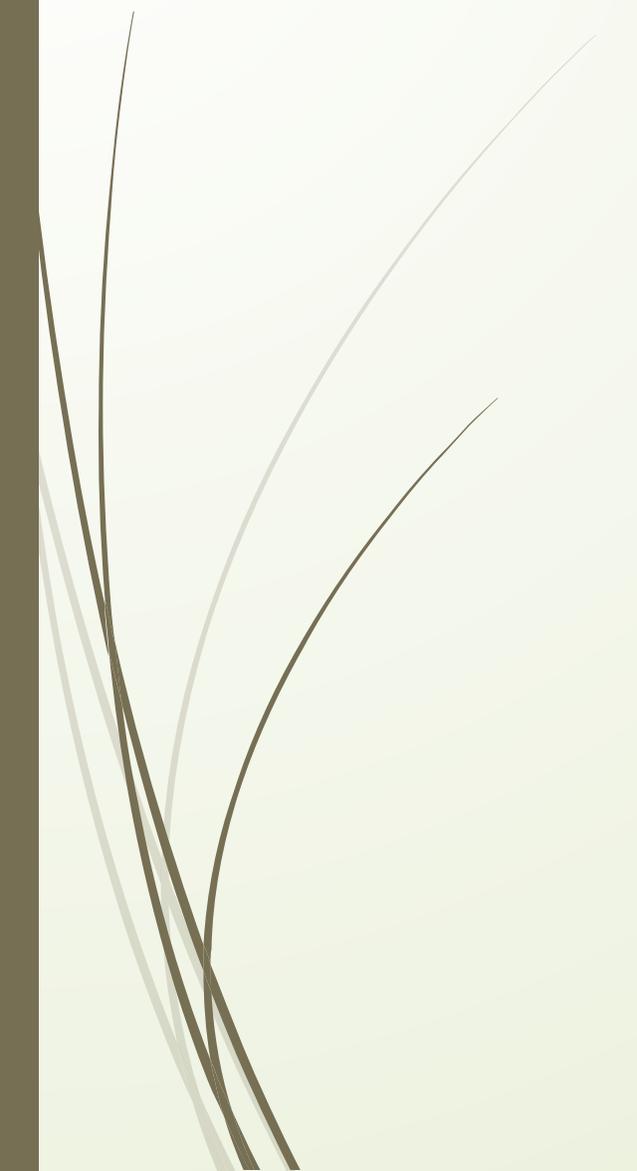
# Kudzu



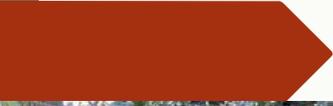




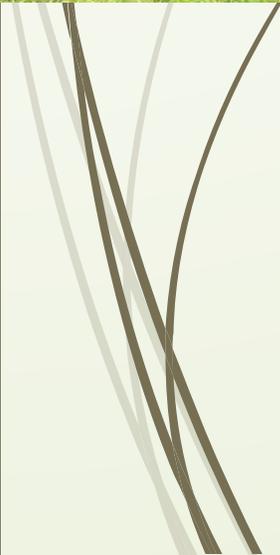
# Before and Afters in the Triangle



















# Merritt's Pasture



