

FRIENDS OF FOREST HILL PARK

The Forest Hill Park Post



www.friendsofforesthillpark.org

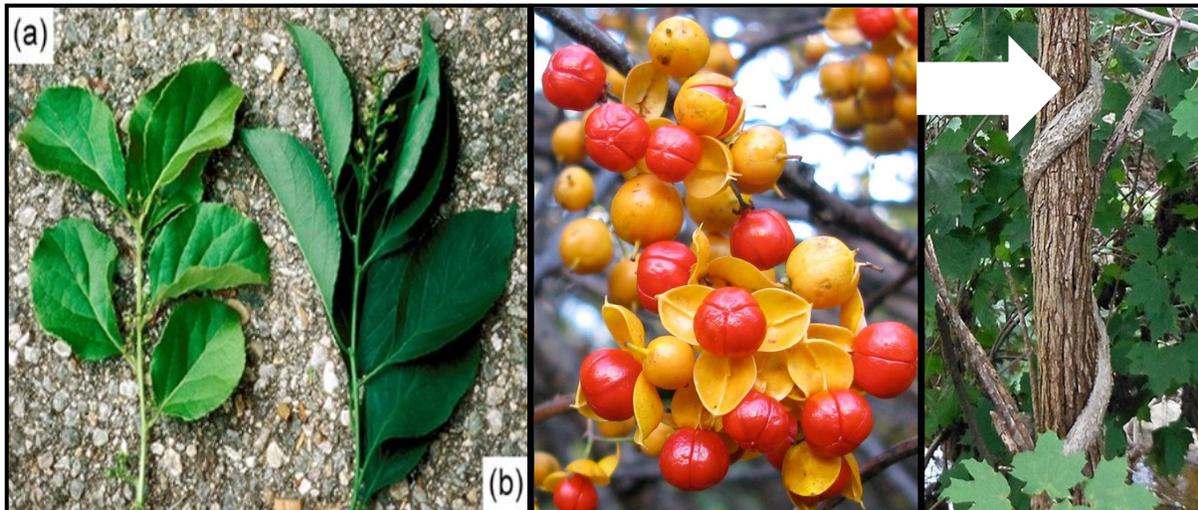
President Chris Catanzaro
Vice President Christie Owen
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Secretary Traci Munyan

Winter 2022

Oriental/Asian Bittersweet: An Invasive Vine

Chris Catanzaro

Oriental or Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is an extremely aggressive, invasive woody vine introduced in the US from East Asia around 1860, mainly due to its attractive leaves (in summer) and attractive fruits (in winter). Since its introduction it has invaded many natural woodland areas throughout our part of the US, including Forest Hill Park, and it may even be in your yard! With twining vines up to 10" in diameter climbing up to 60' into the native tree canopy, it disrupts the native ecosystem and the natural food chain.



Leaves are up to 5" long, in two forms: (a) rounded on mature stem, and (b) elongated with pointed tips on a young stem.

Mature fruit in winter with yellow, reflexed outer parts and three red, fleshy sections.

Woody vine snaking around trunk of young maple.

Pollen and fruit are produced on separate (male and female) plants. In late spring, female vines form clusters of 3-7 small, orange-yellow flowers at the base of each leaf, all along the stem. Fruits turn yellow by late summer, and in fall to winter the skin of the fruit splits and reflexes, revealing three fleshy, bright red sections. The fruits persist through winter. Leaves turn a golden yellow in autumn before they drop.

There is a native bittersweet.

The oriental bittersweet may be confused with the less common American bittersweet (*C. scandens*). The native species has football-shaped leaves, with flowers and fruits only at the ends of the stems. Another difference is the native fruit's bright red rather than yellow skin. No bittersweet is recommended for cultivation. (see "How you can help" below).

How does it spread from place to place?

Like many other invasive plants, Oriental bittersweet reproduces both vegetatively (by root sprouting) and sexually (by seed). Birds eat the fruits and spread the seeds far and wide. Since the seeds are used as ornamentals in dried arrangements and wreaths, we are also guilty of spreading seed if these are discarded outdoors.

Recommendations.

Do not buy, plant, or transplant Oriental bittersweet.

Learn how to identify this plant and, if found growing on your property, remove it.

Dispose of any seed-containing material by bagging it and placing it in the trash.

Do not plant the native species where the invasive one occurs. This prevents hybridization between the native and exotic species.

For more information on identification and removal of this plant:

Anonymous. Vines: Oriental Bittersweet. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/ceor.htm>

Jackson, D. Penn State Extension. Oriental Bittersweet: Accurate Identification (video). Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://extension.psu.edu/oriental-bittersweet-accurate-identification>

Univ. of Minn. Extension and Minn. Dept. of Agric. Defeating a Killer Vine: Oriental Bittersweet Management (video). YouTube. Accessed July 24, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wmZ1Zuho1c>



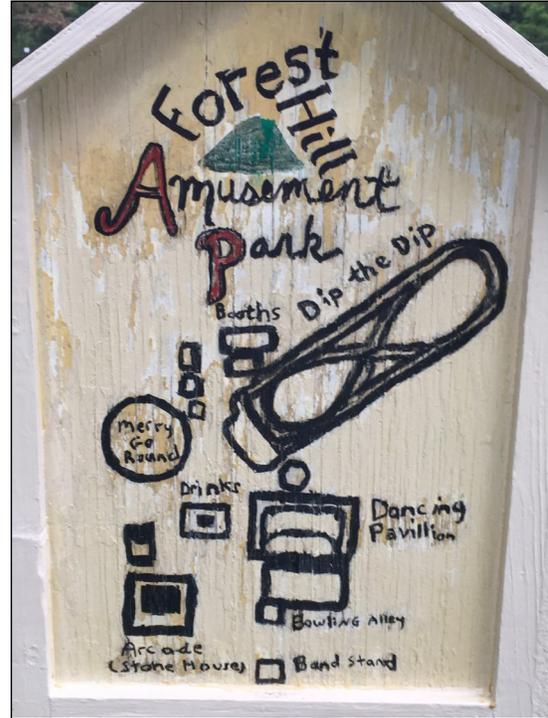
Winter is the time for comfort,
for good food and warmth, for the touch
of a friendly hand and for a talk beside
the fire: it is the time for home.

Edith Sitwell

Little Free Library Gets a Makeover

Several years ago, Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior placed a Little Free Library near the playground in the park. It was quite popular. Individual neighbors as well as groups kept it filled with books appropriate for youngsters, but its years of service outdoors caused substantial damage.

Chris Catanzaro enlisted the aid of skilled workers and, this summer, he and his assistants refurbished the Little Free Library. You can see the results of their work in the photos on the right.



The Pyramid Garden is Established



Project leader, Suzette Lyon, initiates the planting phase.



Formerly covered with invasive plants, this planting site is now filled with native flowers and shrubs.

On September 17th, ten volunteers planted 120 native perennial plants in the new Pyramid Garden at Forest Hill Park. These plants are from 24 species in 13 plant families. Friends of Forest Hill Park will be watering as needed during plant establishment.

Thanks to all who have helped with this project, especially Suzette Lyon, who has spent MANY hours doing planning and procurement. Thanks also to Keep Virginia Beautiful for the funding through the 2022 Green Grants program. The photo, below left, shows the white wood aster (*Eurybia divaricata*), one of the first natives planted in the Pyramid Garden. This demonstration planting increases biodiversity and beauty in this under-recognized portion of the park.



Thank you Friends of Forest Hill Park volunteers!

Arbor Day 2022

Friends of Forest Hill Park started off the week of Arbor Day activities by giving away native trees on October 15th at the Stone House. The trees were provided by Richmond Community Tool Bank.

The Tool Bank, along with Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities also sponsored “Less Turf, More Trees” by planting 200 native trees in 1 ½ acres of the park. Two shifts of volunteers worked planting, watering and mulching the trees. The new trees will help support cleaner air and water as well as wildlife in addition to adding beauty to the landscape.

Other Arbor Day participants were Southside Releaf, Reforest Richmond, Capital Trees, Richmond Tree Stewards, Urban Forestry Division, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and more.



Good weather helped launch Arbor Day activities in Forest Hill Park. The tree giveaway will enhance neighborhoods where the trees are planted and planting 200 trees in the park will provide direct benefits to the creatures that make Forest Hill Park their home.

Christie and Pat did a brisk business for several hours.

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October 29 was the Dave Ridderhof Day of Service and FFHP commemorated it by planting trees in the park. Twenty-seven volunteers put 40 young native trees in the ground just west of the Stone Pyramid. The Tool Bank, Richmond Tree Stewards and Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities provided the trees, tools, nutrients, mulch and water. When the planting was complete, Friends of Forest Hill Park invited the workers to enjoy pizza and soft drinks on site.



Holiday Traditions



Old Time Mincemeat Pie

A Victorian era mincemeat pie filling made with meat and sour cherries.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 1/2 cups dried currants | 1 1/4 pounds round steak, cut into small pieces |
| 2 1/2 cups raisins | 1 cup apple cider |
| 1/2 pound chopped candied mixed fruit peel | 4 tart apples peeled, cored and finely chopped |
| 1/2 cup butter | 1 1/3 cups white sugar |
| (16 ounce) jar sour cherry preserves | 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| 1 teaspoon ground ginger | 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| | 1 (16 ounce) can pitted sour cherries, drained (reserve liquid) |
| | 1 recipe pastry for 9 inch double crust pie |
| | 2 tablespoons heavy cream |

In a Dutch oven, combine beef and apple cider. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and cook for about 20 minutes, or until meat is tender. Remove meat and coarsely chop, then return it to the pot.

Stir in chopped apples, sugar, currants, raisins, citrus peel, butter, and cherry preserves. Add ginger, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon and salt. Let simmer, uncovered, over low heat until mixture is very thick, about 90 minutes. Stir in cherries and remove from heat.

Refrigerate tightly covered for at least one week before using.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Put filling in unbaked pie shell and place pastry on top. Crimp edges and poke several holes in top pastry. Brush top with cream and sprinkle with sugar.

Bake in preheated oven for 40 minutes, or until golden brown.



Join Friends of Forest Hill Park by visiting www.friendsofforesthillpark.org, membership.

Annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$20 for households. Join us and be a Friend.

If you prefer to mail your membership dues, please send to the following address:

FFHP

PO 13161

Richmond, VA 23225

Thank you for your support.

Friends of Forest Hill Park is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.