

Best Practices for Conservation at Hazelhurst

Keep English ivy and Oriental bittersweet out of the trees.

English ivy is an aggressive invasive that can kill mature trees and prevent young trees from developing . (See conservation chairwoman if you desire published research.) It's not back-breaking to control it. You can (and actually must) do it. It's easy - but know you might have to "trim it" every few years. Start with your site, and then move on to remove ivy from the base of tree trunks anywhere in camp. Don't wait for someone to give you special permission to control English ivy beyond your site. YOU HAVE permission! Cut the vines at ankle level, and again at waist level. Leave the upper part on the bark; it will die. Pull the cut vine sections away from the base of the trunk. That's it. Easy. There is no justification for letting ivy climb a tree, bloom and berry, making thousands of new seeds to be spread around camp. *It has already consumed too many acres of our camp property, and will continue all the way to the beach if allowed.* (It HAS, in some neighboring areas!)

To kill English ivy **on the ground**, there are several options. You can pull it and lay the pulled vines in a designated brush pile, where you know they will be removed by our property manager. You can cover it, alive, on the ground, with black landscape cloth *for a full year*, and then rake up the dead vines, cover the area with heavy cardboard and a thick layer of leaves, and then start over in the second year with a mixture of native plants such as ginger, wild strawberries, Virginia creeper, Solomon's seal, Virginia bluebells, celandine poppy, perennial geraniums, numerous varieties of ferns, etc. (See plant lists). The best result in the end will be ground that is covered mostly with fallen tree leaves - *not* a green carpet. Visit natural unspoiled forests in the area to see how it should look, or look inside Oak Rd, mentally removing the myrtle and ivy which are re-invading.

Oriental Bittersweet is a very obvious problem all over camp. Site holders are responsible for removing the vines around their area, and for helping to remove them from shared areas. Bittersweet will not only prevent young trees from being able to grow, but will literally pull trees over, bending them to the ground and killing them. Examples are easy to see all over camp.

Remove invasive species where possible.

These include burning bush (aka winged euonymus), shrub honeysuckle, vine honeysuckle, jetbead, buckthorn, privet, garlic mustard, English ivy, pachysandra, boxwood, barberry, and Oriental bittersweet, among others.

Any member of the HH Conservation Committee will be more than eager to teach you how to recognize invasives. Just ask for 20 - 30 minutes!

When you plant, plant natives.

We want our sites and our woods to be healthy duneland and forest on Lake Michigan. Natives will thrive here naturally. Insects, birds and mammals thrive in the presence of their native flora. DO NOT BUY OR PLANT exotic plants or trees from a nursery or your home. No exotic grass, bush or tree, even if they are not “invasive”, is appropriate for planting inside camp. We have dozens of beautiful choices that thrive and belong in a duneland forest. For help with selections, consult our Hazelhurst reference list, ask the conservation chair for help, or discuss it with a horticulture or environmental professional.

If \$\$\$ is an issue - fear not. The Conservation Chair can help find you some plantings within camp that can be divided without harm to the original plant. Do not be shy about asking for help.

Brush piles

Both woody brush and vines are ok. Brush piles are removed by camp caretaker with a forklift. Please do NOT add leaves. Leaves can be used as mulch on land around a site, or piled deep enough to kill a patch of unwanted invasives.

Leaves

In general, leave leaves alone. That's what good forest soil is *made* of. If you must clear a few, make a pile in the woods, but *never* toss leaves down the side of a ravine. Adding an unnatural amount of leaves into any water system (pond, or creek) disturbs the natural balance, and hurts the ecosystem of the water.

“Topsoil”

During construction/renovation, DO NOT allow contractors to bring in topsoil from outside of camp. They must use *only* the soil at the site to grade a site. Outside topsoil is full of many dangerous weeds for our setting.

“Flat-topping”

Using a weed-wacker or other equipment to “flat-top” any area is not good for desired tree seedlings that are trying to emerge through the undergrowth. Even the mighty oak tree has to start out small and have room and light to grow. Additionally, “whacking” an invasive usually makes it grow more aggressively, being in effect a pruning that encourages more and more new growth. In particular, when this is done to English ivy, it hastens the development of what is known as **“ivy desert”**... a monoculture in which no other plant can grow. If you think this picture is pretty - think again.

Look it up online to see some devastating photos.



Consider light pollution

In general, the less artificial light, the better - but of course, be safe. Use minimal light, pointed downward toward the ground... just enough to be safe. If possible, use lights that are **“dark sky compliant”**. Look it up, for a quick education on why it matters. That’s it. **No** flood lights. **No** lights shining on a building or (heaven forbid) “landscaping” ;) In a dark woods, a 25 watt bulb can be seen hundreds of feet away. That’s enough to show your friends where your cottage is.... and enough to show them the path to your door. *Turn out the lights when they arrive.*

Motion-sensitive lights are problematic, as they unpredictably turn on for every racoon, opossum or fox - and stay on for 15 *unnecessary* minutes. Not a friendly thing for the wildlife - nor for your neighbors.

Consider sound pollution

We cannot always avoid loud sounds, but when we can, we should. Pretend you're a toad, a chipmunk, a fox, a nesting bird, a snake, a song bird in the tree or an owl scoping out tonight's hunting ground....or a baby fawn who's been settled in for the daytime in a good camouflage spot chosen by Mom, until she can come back to feed. The assault of power saws leaf-blowers, mowers, or weed wackers is *terrifying*. *It is not rare for a mother animal to become so panicked that she leaves her nest or babies, flees and cannot find her way back to care for them. Please think about this. Can't your task be done with a rake? hand pruners? loppers? a hand saw? Borrow the tool from your neighbor. We are a community. Choose to not terrify wildlife. This is their home.*

*Hazelhurst is special for many reasons - prime among them is that it is **DIFFERENT** from our urban and suburban homes and lifestyles. It would be easy to mindlessly recreate those (default) environments here in the dunes of Lake Michigan. In fact, we can see areas which have done so all along the lake's shorelines. But that is not why we belong to the Prairie Club, and that is not why we love to be at Hazelhurst.*

Our *club mission statement* is for us to protect and appreciate "the great outdoors" - not to harm the natural environment by making our human "creature comforts" the priority.

And there you have it!
The distilled definition of CONSERVATION.
Put Nature first. And us, second.

We **share this special place, Hazelhurst** - with each other,
and, more importantly,
with the native flora and fauna. Let's **keep** it special.

To learn more, contact - or JOIN - the Hazelhurst Conservation Committee!