

Project type: Final Report

1. Title: Mile-A-Minute (MaM) Invasive Weed Educational Outreach, Orange and Dutchess Counties, NY

2. Project Leader(s): Rosemarie S. Baglia, Horticulture Resource Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension Orange County (CCEOC); Stephanie D. Mallozzi, Agriculture Horticulture Program Leader, Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (CCEDC).

3. Cooperator(s) to serve as educational resources : Charles R. O'Neill, Jr., Coordinator, CCE Invasive Species Program; New York State Integrated Pest Management (NYSIPM); Emilie Hauser, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC); Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve; John McVay, Stewardship Director, Orange County Land Trust; Dutchess County Environmental Management Council; Neil Curri, Senior Resource Educator (GIS) CCEDC; Holly Menninger, Cornell Invasive Species Research Program; NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets; NYSDEC Invasive Species Program; and Lower Hudson Valley PRISM.

4. Abstract: In this project, existing educational tools such as Power Point presentations, brochures, displays, etc. will be adapted for individual county use. Workshops will be conducted for community residents, key organizations, elected officials and municipal personnel (i.e.: garden clubs, recreational clubs, Department of Public Works, Parks Departments, Highway Departments, Utility Companies, and Local Municipalities) in Orange and Dutchess Counties. We will facilitate the networking of various groups involved or interested in MAM issues through centralized educational outreach. As a result of this project, enhanced community awareness of MaM will result in more comprehensive location mapping and tracking.

5. Background and Justification: Mile-A-Minute (MaM) is an extremely invasive weed that has invaded Orange and Dutchess Counties. It quickly spreads over a large area and smothers all vegetation in its path, changing natural ecosystems. Orange County is at the forefront of the spread of MaM west of the Hudson River while in Dutchess County it is at the forefront of the spread east of the Hudson River.

In Orange County, there are several locations where MaM is found but a large population is at the tip of the Wallkill River which flows northward into Ulster County. We need to increase our efforts to contain the spread before it moves north and invades Ulster County. It is essential that we educate appropriate municipal and community organizations and departments along with the public about this weed and the need for proper control in our landscapes.

In Dutchess County, MaM has spread along the Jackson Creek (Town of LaGrange) and will continue to spread to connecting creeks and the Hudson River. It has also been found in the towns of Beekman, Dover and, as of October 2008, it was confirmed in the city of Beacon (Town of Fishkill) which lies along the Hudson River.

This project focused on educating the community, municipal groups and the general public of Orange and Dutchess Counties about MaM - the invasive nature of the weed, identification, and control options (pulling, chemical controls, etc.). This outreach focused on using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to controlling this invasive weed. Currently, in Orange County, the NYSDEC has been taking the lead on mapping confirmed MaM locations and using volunteers to pull the weed. In at least one location, the weed is so far out of control that the NYSDEC has contracted with a local horticultural services company to control the vines. In Dutchess County, CCEDC took the lead in mapping confirmed MaM locations as well as educational outreach. Both counties used educational outreach to target audiences to assist the NYSDEC effort to locate and eradicate this invasive pest. By targeting our educational outreach to specific community and municipal groups (i.e. garden clubs, recreational clubs, Department of Public Works, Parks Departments, Highway Departments, Utility Companies, and Local Municipalities) that are likely to come in contact with MaM, the residents of Orange and Dutchess Counties became more aware of this invasive threat. Location reporting became more comprehensive and accurate. Volunteers assisted in educational outreach.

6. Objectives:

- 1) Create a general awareness of MaM among target audiences on the importance of detection and management.
- 2) Facilitate networking of various groups involved or concerned about MaM issues. Demonstrate how these groups can contribute to containment efforts.
- 3) Assist NYSDEC in identifying locations and recommending control options to slow the spread of MaM. Create awareness of volunteer opportunities to participate in this effort.
- 4) Evaluate project effectiveness.

7. Procedures: CCE Orange County

- 1) Hire and train a part-time MaM Project Assistant. Project Assistant will receive orientation and in-service training about MaM, and IPM methodology from Orange County Horticulture educators, NYSIPM and other Cornell specialists.
- 2) Project Assistant will contact and collaborate with project cooperators for information on regional MaM efforts and use them as information resources for identifying target audiences and developing teaching tools including the development of a MaM Power Point presentation. This Power Point presentation will include identification, reporting, and eradication methods stressing the IPM approach, and the status of the invasion in Orange County. Additional educational displays, fact sheets, news articles, and preserved samples will also be prepared.
- 3) Project Assistant (with help from Project Leaders and Cooperators) will plan a MaM workshop in February 2009 for key individuals from the target community and municipal groups in Orange County to facilitate networking. This educational workshop will focus on

identification of MaM, its threat to our natural ecosystems, management options, and who to contact for more information and assistance. Project Cooperators will be invited to attend and speak to the group on their involvement with MaM and how they may be a resource for community and municipal groups as well as volunteer opportunities. Participants will be offered the opportunity to have follow-up educational presentations for their members and/or staff. Project Assistant will schedule a time to deliver follow up MaM educational presentations.

4) Program Assistant will write articles for newsletters and local newspapers on MaM to foster a general awareness among Orange County residents and encourage volunteer members of target audiences and the public to scout properties and send in potential MaM samples to the CCE Orange County diagnostic lab for identification at no charge.

5) Positively identified sample locations will be recorded and reported to NYSDEC so that these sightings will be added to the Orange County MaM map. Property owners will be notified of the presence of MaM and advised of management methods following the IPM protocol of cultural, mechanical, and other control methods. Program Assistant will schedule educational outreach at upcoming community events where factsheets, displays and preserved samples can be showcased. CCE Master Gardener (MG) volunteers and staff will use the educational tools developed through this project as outreach through the Speakers Bureau program and Ask-A-MG tables at community events.

6) Project evaluation will be done by asking workshop participants to fill out a program evaluation and state their intentions for adoption of IPM practices for managing invasive plants. Participants will also be offered follow-up training for their staff or members. Effectiveness of the program will be determined in part by how many of the 25-30 participants request follow-up training. We will also count the number of MaM samples submitted to the CCEOC diagnostic lab; however, these numbers are not expected until after the project ending date.

7. Procedures: CCE Dutchess County

1) Staff an information booth at local events such as community days, school superintendents' days, professional association trade shows/conferences, town board meetings, etc. Serve as a resource to the horticulture industry for invasives education via talks at industry meetings as well as Hudson Valley commercial horticulture education programs (i.e. invasives presentation as part of certified arborist training). Print quantities of "*Wanted: Have You Seen This Plant?*" brochures and deliver to town and city halls. Print MaM ID postcards and enclose with mailings and program packets. Prepare PowerPoint presentations (lengthy and short versions). These presentations can be used by staff and volunteers. In addition, these resources will be shared with other counties in the Hudson Valley for educational purposes. CCEDC staff will be available to work with staff in surrounding counties on MaM efforts.

2) All inquiries concerning MaM in Dutchess County will be funneled through CCEDC to keep track of population spread. CCEDC will be the "go-to" organization for accurate education and awareness in Dutchess County. This will halt rumors and false confirmations. CCEDC will maintain and moderate a MaM List Serve.

3) GPS mapping of existing and new populations will demonstrate whether or not MaM is

contained and prevented from spreading any further.

4) Offer municipalities viable control options so they may decide which option is the best for their situation and guide them through the NYSDEC permit process in environmentally sensitive areas so they can acquire the necessary permits in a timely manner to begin control efforts at the optimal time.

8. Results and Discussion:

As a result of this project, CCE Orange County conducted a workshop attended by 25 individuals representing key organizations in Orange County followed by a number of presentations given to specific groups. CCE Dutchess County held informational sessions in affected towns as well as surrounding towns with confirmed infestations. In 2009, we had an increased number of reports of potential MaM locations as a result of increased knowledge of MaM. In 2009, MaM was found in Millerton which represents the northeast corner of the county. Prior to that MaM was only reported up to the town of LaGrange which is in central Dutchess County. Both counties facilitated networking among community groups and municipalities to work together to locate, identify, map, and eradicate this invasive weed using sound IPM management practices. Through the work of this project, we now have the knowledge and educational tools (MaM Power Point presentation, displays, preserved samples, brochures) and the infrastructure of supporting human resources through our networking groups to continue our mission to contain the spread of MaM. This was done by educational outreach through the CCE Orange and Dutchess Counties.

9. ***Project Locations:*** Various locations throughout Orange and Dutchess County as well as CCEOC and CCEDC.

10. Samples of Resources Developed:

Orange County:

- Informational Power Point for diverse audiences on MaM history, identification and management.
- Three display boards on MaM identification and management.
- Distributed Posters on MaM identification and management to 19 libraries, numerous town halls, post offices, horse riding stables, home garden centers, and farm stands.
- Distributed over 1000 MaM flyers with CCEOC contact information.
- CCEOC website section on MaM.
- Program evaluation from the workshop held at CCEOC.

Dutchess County:

- Informational Powerpoints on MaM history, identification and management.
 - Powerpoint for communities.
 - Powerpoint for town supervisors.
 - Powerpoint for Dutchess County Legislature.
 - Powerpoint for Dutchess County Planning Department.

- Powerpoint videotaped for town cable closed circuit TV.
- One display board on MaM identification and management.
- Posters on MaM identification and management.
- Distributed over 1000 MaM flyers with CCEOC contact information.
- Over 1000 color MaM postcards distributed at talks and community events.
- Over 500 MaM refrigerator magnets distributed at talks and community events.
- CCEDC website section on MaM.
- GIS map of MaM infestations in the county.
- Program evaluation from the workshop held at CCEDC.

Quotes From Participants:

“A great asset to the community to have this education available.”

“I learned it is as invasive as kudzu in the south.”

“I learned how to identify life cycle, local infestations and precautions.”

“After workshop was more comfortable speaking to others about it. Was able to explain with the help of display board to 22 people at a green conference.”

“I believe I have mile-a-minute in my backyard. It looks just like the picture on my frig magnet.”

“I learned how to identify it; who to call; how to manage it.”

“I had seen an article on it, but the presentation was much more informative and memorable.”

“A lot of the pictures were excellent and I now feel confident that I can identify the vine.”

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