

## INVASIVE PLANTS REPLACE PAWTUXET FLORA

Invasive species are increasingly threatening native plants along the Pawtuxet River loop trail. Areas where man has disrupted the land, like the edges of parking lots, ball fields, and near Shaw's supermarket, are particularly susceptible. Multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, purple loosestrife, phragmites, and Japanese knotweed have already taken over natural areas along the river.

When bulldozers or major construction disrupt the soil, these hardy plants are the first to colonize, and they grow quickly before native plants can gain a foothold. Over the last two years, Friends of the Pawtuxet has removed much multiflora rose from the trail, mostly at the trailhead near the lower Rhodes on the Pawtuxet parking lot. Many large multiflora rose bushes, identified by woody red branches with thorns in the winter and bright green foliage with showy white flowers in the summer, have been dug up, enabling jewelweed, blackberries, red twig dogwood, and field horsetails to grow. More multiflora remains, especially by the footbridge and ten feet off the trail.

The invasive rose also helps Japanese bittersweet, which is best known for its pretty red berries and bright yellow casings, enter mature trees. The vine winds up the tall spikes of a rosebush to reach lower tree branches. As the rose expands and shields smaller plants from the sun, the vine heads upward, strangling the tree trunk and competing with its leaves for light. This combination can be seen at the footbridge and behind Shaw's.

Phragmites, a tall thin reed, and purple loosestrife, a bushy wetland plant with showy pinkish purple flowers, replace native cattails in freshwater wetlands. The Stillhouse Cove restoration in Cranston targeted phragmites, which can also be seen in the wetland east of Hollywood Video at the edge of Shaw's parking lot. Purple loosestrife is in the same wetland and on the Cranston side just upriver from the large grassy field where a makeshift trail crosses the Silver Hook pond outlet. Japanese knotweed, which looks like bamboo, is in many locations, including at the Little Fay Field footbridge and behind Shaw's.

In March, Asian clams were found for the first time in the river. The hard shell clam is smaller than a dime, competes with native species for food and multiplies rapidly blanketing river bottoms.

Multiflora rose and bittersweet can be dug up, but other invasives regenerate from small pieces of root. To help, join our trail work efforts. Sign up for the market email list to receive notice of work days.

## STOP & SHOP MESS

Despite the protests of neighbors, Friends of the Pawtuxet, and other environmental groups, the Cranston City Council voted in February to change a zoning definition to allow Stop & Shop to build a supermarket on the Warwick Nurseries property on Warwick Avenue. Concern for local tax revenue and jobs swamped environmental concerns. Richard Baccari's Churchill & Banks development company is pushing the project, but by mid-March no plans had been presented to the city.

The City Council feels that environmental concerns can be addressed during the site plan review process, a little known city oversight procedure for large construction projects. Unfortunately, the process cannot require project changes. This weakness has led to some spectacular failures in recent years, most notably the Orchard Farms Elementary School design.

Nevertheless, Friends of the Pawtuxet hopes the project will include a trail easement along the river, fencing, a vegetative buffer to catch trash blowing off the parking lot, and a proper storm water runoff system. Neighbors have additional concerns about noise, lighting, and trash.

## GREEN EVENTS CALENDAR

Sat April 18: **EARTH DAY CLEANUP:** 9 AM at the DEM Supply Depot, 230 Warwick Ave., Cranston

Sat. May 9: **FARMERS MARKET OPENS:** Saturdays, 9-12 on Rhodes Place, just off Broad Street in Pawtuxet Village. In May, flowering plants for Mothers Day, planting trays, spinach, and honey for sale.

Sat. May 16: **KIDS NATURE WALK:** Led by Steve Stycos (461-2618). All ages welcome, but the one-hour event is designed for kids 7-17. Identify trees with a simple guide and do a small cleanup. 10 AM at the recycling table at the market.

Sat May 23: **ENERGY CONSERVATION:** Edward S. Rhodes School 4<sup>th</sup> grade sells compact florescent light bulbs to pay for a Save The Bay field trip

Wed. May 27: **CRANSTON EAST JAZZ BAND CONCERT:** Hall Library lawn, 6 PM, rain date 5/28.

Sat May 30: **GARDEN TIPS:** At the market, Edgewood Garden Club advice & Rhodes light bulb sales

Sat. June 6: **GREAT PAWTUXET PADDLE:** Six-mile flatwater paddle sponsored by the Pawtuxet River Authority. 9 AM at the canoe launch at Knight Street. and Pontiac Avenue on the Warwick/Cranston line. Rides from Rhodes on the Pawtuxet and cookout. Details: [www.pawtuxet.org](http://www.pawtuxet.org)

Sat. June 13: **NO MARKET:** Gaspee Day Parade.

Sat June 20: **FARM & RIVER DAY / OFFICIAL MARKET OPENING**

**BIRD WALK:** Guided by Mike Kieron, assistant curator of the Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History. 8 AM in the lower Rhodes on the Pawtuxet parking lot, Rhodes Place, Cranston. Bring binoculars, but not dogs. Children should be at least seven years old. Thanks to the RI Natural History Survey for arranging this walk

**CANOE RENTALS:** At the lower Rhodes on the Pawtuxet parking lot. We supply canoe, paddles, and life preservers; you paddle the calm river at your pace for an hour. Great trip for kids. Canoes available at 9, 10 & 11. \$3/adult; \$1/child. Reservations required. Call Hillary at 784-8240 after May 30.

**FIREFLY WALK:** 8:15 PM at the lower Rhodes on the Pawtuxet parking lot. Erik Anderson (474-1515) will lead an easy walk to see the annual firefly mating ritual. Bug repellent, long sleeves and long pants recommended. Please do not bring jars, nets, or noisy electronic devices.

Sat. June 27:

**BIG GREEN BOOK SALE:** Used-book sale 9-12 at the market. All proceeds go to the market's environmental projects. Drop book donations on front porches at 25 Berwick Lane, 10 & 18 Williams Avenue, or 37 Ferncrest Avenue in Cranston.

**TREE WALK:** Walk with Rhode Island Tree Council's John Campinini, Rhode Island's top tree expert, Learn to measure champion trees. 10 AM at the recycling table at the market. Please, no dogs.

**RAIN BARREL DISTRIBUTION:** New England Rain Barrel will distribute rain barrels at the market. Barrels must be ordered in advance at [www.nerainbarrel.com](http://www.nerainbarrel.com)

Sat. September 19: **MUSHROOM WALK:** URI Oceanography professor Robert Kenney will lead a mushroom walk. 10 AM at the lower Rhodes on the Pawtuxet parking lot. Thanks to the Rhode Island Natural History Survey for arranging this walk.

Sat. October 17: **PUMPKIN & PAW PAW FESTIVAL:** 9-12 at the market. The Pawtuxet Village Association, Edgewood Garden Club, and Friends of the Pawtuxet offer canoe rentals, hayrides, a kids crafts activity, a plant and bake sale, and gardening advice. Also, paw paws will be on sale and plastic plant pots collected for reuse. Reservation recommended for canoe rentals (call Hillary at 784-8240 after Sept. 30) and hayrides (purchase tickets, \$3/person or \$6/family, at Twice Told Tales starting Oct. 10).

Sat. November 21: **THANKSGIVING DAY MARKET:** The final market of the year.

## **ODDS & ENDS**

Friends of the Pawtuxet has several projects for a Boy or Girl Scout troop, or an Eagle Scout project. We are also looking for a representative to attend monthly meetings of the Environment Council of Rhode Island, a state coalition of the green groups. Interested? Call Steve Stycos (461-2618).

The farmers market sends a weekly email with market news and other Pawtuxet/Edgewood events. To be added to the list, email [steven@stycos.com](mailto:steven@stycos.com).

As always, a special thanks to Rhodes on the Pawtuxet for providing space free of charge for the farmers market, our canoeing days and walks.

## **MORE TREE PLANTING**

Friends of the Pawtuxet coordinated planting eleven trees last year. A group of Roger Williams University freshmen planted four tulip trees at the farmers market site under the supervision of Rosemary Driscoll and Steve Stycos. Friends of the Pawtuxet and the market split the \$1000 cost of the trees.

Next, Jean Pettingill, Hilary Fifer, Penny Hough, Steve Stycos and DEM supervisor Paul Zolkos planted two ash, a tulip, and a red maple along the loop trail at the DEM Supply Depot. The Rhode Island Trails Advisory Committee, a Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management group, paid for three trees. The tulip tree was paid for by the Leher family in memory of Elliot M. Stone, who died in April 2005 at age 59 after a two-month battle with cancer. Elliot was the son of Ira and Ruth Stone and lived for most of his childhood on Reservoir Avenue. A graduate of Classical High School and Boston University, he was involved in boy scouting and spent summers working at Camp Yawgoog. He was also CEO of Massachusetts Health Data Consortium, a health-care information systems company.

Finally, Warwick Nurseries donated two ash trees that were planted at Edgewood Highland School, and a red maple planted in the small park at the corner of Wheeler, Grand, and Pawtuxet Avenues.

## **HELP US RECYCLE AT THE FARMERS MARKET**

1. **BERRY BOXES:** We collect quart, pint, and half pint boxes at the market, attach a market sticker, and give them to farmers to reuse. In two years, we have reused 8000 boxes. Please do not bring other sized boxes. We throw them away. Please also wash your boxes before returning.
2. **HONEY JARS & CARTONS:** Farmers Chang Xiong and Michelle Kozloski will reuse clean egg cartons. Bernie Bieder will reuse honey jars and lids.
3. **BOOKS & CDS:** Our annual used-book sales raise money for our berry box reuse program and other environmental programs. Leftover books are given to local libraries. Books can be dropped at 25 Berwick Lane, 10 & 18 Williams Avenue, and 37 Ferncrest Avenue, Cranston.
4. **DAMAGED CDS:** We recycle damaged CDs and cases this year. Use the box at the recycling table.
5. **PLASTIC PLANT POTS:** October 17, the Edgewood Garden Club will collect plastic plant pots and planting trays for farmers to reuse.

## **RIVER RESTORATION MOVES AHEAD**

The Pawtuxet River Authority, Narragansett Bay Estuary Program and partners continue to work on the Pawtuxet Falls project, with the goal of restoring natural flow to the lower river within a year. Early in 2009 the project received \$50,000 from the R.I. Coastal Resources Management Council and \$300,000 from R.I. Dept. of Environmental Management. With funds already committed by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service and other organizations, the partners now have enough to complete the project. To obtain the necessary RIDEM permits, the project must prove that it protects human and environmental health and will not harm Pawtuxet Cove marinas or wetland resources.

**PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO FRIENDS OF THE PAWTUXET**

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to help. My contribution is enclosed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I'd like to purchase a tree planted in the memory of \_\_\_\_\_.  
Enclosed is \$150. Please include a brief description of the person for a future newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address & Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions to Friends of the Pawtuxet are used for the newsletter, tree planting, the farmers market, and membership in the Environment Council of Rhode Island. Contributions are not tax deductible because we are not an IRS-recognized non-profit corporation.

Please mail your contribution to Friends of the Pawtuxet, 37 Ferncrest Ave., Cranston, 02905. Thank you.

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**INSIDE... FARMERS MARKET OPENS MAY 9... TREE, BIRD & MUSHROOM WALKS... INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT... CANOEING...RECYCLING**

Friends of the Pawtuxet  
37 Ferncrest Avenue  
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