

# News Release

## For immediate publication

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## The Invasive Callery Pear

As of January 1, 2023, it is now illegal to buy or sell Callery Pear and its cultivars in Ohio. This species quickly became a popular option for landscapes due to its signature, vibrant white flowers in the spring and the glowing red leaves in the fall. Despite the smelly aroma they put off in the spring, this recent news has created even more stink around Callery Pear. The tree's ability to reproduce, spread, and sustain harsh environmental conditions landed it on the Ohio Invasive species list in 2018 and the 5 -year grace period has now ended in 2023, making the plant illegal to buy or sell in the state. The Ohio Administrative Code, Rule 901:5-30-01 also lists 37 other species as invasives in Ohio.

So, what does "invasive species" mean? The Ohio Department of Natural Resources defines invasive species as "a species that is not native to a specific location (an introduced species) and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy or human health", and Callery pear perfectly fits this description.

How did we get here? Callery pear is native to Asia and as OSU Extension Specialist, Joe Boggs explains, Callery pear was brought into the U.S. for its desirable resistance to fire blight. While the hybrid crosses didn't prove to be useful for fruiting pear production, the "Bradford" cultivar was a major hit within the landscape and nursery industry. Bradford pears began showing up in many landscapes. Unfortunately, these trees also started showing up in many other unintended locations. Originally, Bradford pears were also popular because they didn't produce fruit.

If they didn't produce fruit, how did they become the invasive species that we see taking over vacant lots and fields today? New cultivars were brought into the market to combat the infamous weak branch structure of the Bradford cultivars. Joe Boggs also explains in his article titled "*Callery Pear: the Jekyll and Hyde Tree*" that Teresa Culley, a professor at the University of Cincinnati found that these new cultivars were crossing and creating trees that produced fruit. Birds were very fond of the fruit and quickly spread the seeds beyond the landscape. Today, we can see vacant fields filled with Callery pear. This may be a beautiful site for us in the spring but it's a devastating sign for our native species.

What's next? This new rule doesn't require the removal of existing Callery pear trees but replacing them with native species is a very good idea. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources provides some alternative native species options to consider:

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.), eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), American plum (*Prunus americana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), eastern hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*), American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*), hawthorn (*Crateagus* spp.), and blackgum (*Nyssa sylvatica*).

### Program Updates

March 7: The USDA FSA office in Clinton County will be hosting Producer Meetings to discuss the new Emergency Relief Program, Phase 2 (ERP) as well as the new Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP). There will be 2 meeting times available at 8:30am and 5:00pm. Contact Katy Roush at 937-382-2315 Ext. 2 for more details.

March 8: Clinton, Greene, and Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District's will be hosting a Cover Crop Symposium at Wilmington College in the McCoy Meeting Room (Kelly Center) from 6:30-8:30PM. For more information contact Clinton SWCD at 937-382-2461 Ext. 3.