IMPORTANCE
An “invasive species” is an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. The known ecological impacts of invasive species include loss of threatened and endangered species, altered structure and composition of terrestrial and aquatic communities, and reduction in overall species diversity. Early detection followed by rapid response can detect and eradicate incipient populations of invasive species before they have a chance to become widely established, thus eliminating the need for costly and resource intensive control programs. Only when invasions are caught early will the chance of eradication remain high.

WHAT WE ARE DOING
Invasive plants and pests present on each park’s invasive species early detection list are being sought during routine monitoring in the Eastern Rivers and Mountains Network (ERMN). Knowledgeable monitoring crew members provide an additional “set of eyes and ears” to detect incipient species occurrences while in the parks. Park natural resource managers, Exotic Plant Management Teams, and other National Park Service scientists are also used for their daily park presence. In May 2008, the ERMN vegetation monitoring crew began opportunistic sampling at ERMN parks.

WHAT WE ARE FINDING
During invasive species early detection surveillance monitoring in 2008 and 2009, 20 new invasive plant and pest occurrences were documented at five parks. New species occurrences included Japanese barberry (Berberis thunbergii), narrowleaf bittercress (Cardamine impatiens), privet (Ligustrum sp.), gypsy moth (Lymantria dispar), Amur corktree (Phellodendron amurense), Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum), linden arrowwood (Viburnum dilatatum), emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) and viburnum leaf beetle (Pyrrhalta viburni). Of the 15 new plant occurrences, 10 consisted of single specimens and/or small populations and were hand-pulled or chemically treated.


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