



WHITE RIVER
ALLIANCE

COMMON WEEDS

Keep an eye out for these repeat offenders

There's no such thing as a "no-maintenance" garden. Sooner or later, everyone has to do some weeding. Use this guide to identify which plants need to be removed. And remember, establishing a dense stand of native plants will help limit weed growth. Spend a little time weeding every week, and you'll have a beautiful garden to enjoy.



Wild garlic or wild onion

- Identifiable by tall (6-24”), thin, hollow leaves
- When leaves are crushed, it smells like garlic or onion
- Small clumps can be easily pulled by hand
- Nodding Wild Onion is a desirable native plant that looks similar



Henbit

- Henbit appears in early spring
- It has square stems and is a member of the mint family
- Flowers are pinkish to purple and trumpet shaped
- Henbit can easily be pulled from moist soil



Canada thistle

- Leaves are oblong with spines along the edges
- Spiny purple flowers are visible from June to August
- Canada thistle is a very difficult weed to control due to an extensive root system
- Pulling is typically not effective, however persistent repeated pulling may deprive the root system of food and weaken it.
- Herbicide control is usually the best control method



Large crabgrass and Smooth crabgrass

- Crabgrass can be identified from other turfgrasses by its wider blades and lighter green color
- It often has reddish-purple stems and grows in a prostrate manner
- Crabgrass can be pulled from moist soil



Black medic

- Black medic has a close resemblance to other clovers
- It can be identified by its trifoliate leaves and small yellow flowers
- Black medic can be easily pulled from moist soils



Prostrate spurge and spotted spurge

- Spurges have small egg-shaped leaves, oppositely arranged on the stem
- All spurges emit a white milky sap when broken. This sap is a latex and some people can develop a rash after coming in contact
- Spotted spurge can be identified by the dark red spot in the center of the leaf
- Plants can easily be pulled in moist soil



Purslane

- Purslane is typically found in areas where growth of other plants is not vigorous
- It has a thick succulent, rubbery leaves and stems
- Purslane grows in a prostrate manner
- If left to flower, it will produce yellow flowers
- Eradication is best by hand removal. Plants pull easily in moist soil



Shepherd's purse

- The lower leaves are similar to that of a dandelion
- White flowers appear at the top of a 6 to 18 inch flowerstalk in clusters
- Seeds are contained in shells that resemble notched triangles
- A single plant can produce over 33,000 seeds
- A thin taproot allows this plant to easily be pulled or hoed from moist soil while young



Oxalis

- Oxalis is also known as creeping woodsorrel
- This plant is often mistaken for clover because of its shamrock type leaves.
- In cooler weather, the leaves may turn a purplish-red color, but some may have purplish leaves all year round
- Oxalis has small, yellow, 5 petal flowers
- Plants pull easily in moist soil



Broadleaf plantain

- Broadleaf plantain can be identified by its broad leaves with veins parallel to the margins
- The leaves are arranged in a rosette shape
- Flowers appear as tall green spikes
- Physical removal is a moderately effective control method



Foxtail

- Foxtail species can be identified by the long cylindrical bristly seedhead
- It has wider blades than most grasses
- Foxtails are also a lighter color than most turfgrasses
- Some foxtails have hairs on the leaves while others do not
- If the soil is moist, plants can fairly easily be pulled
- Some native, desirable wild rye grasses look similar, but their seed heads are larger than that of foxtail



Reed canary grass

- Typically grows in saturated or nearly saturated soils
- Usually found along roadside ditches, right-of-ways, riparian areas, and shallow marshes
- Plants are usually 3– 7 feet tall with smooth green, upright stems
- Leaves are 4-8 inches long and about 1/2 inch wide
- Flowers appear in June and July
- Reed canary grass does not stand upright during winter
- Hand pulling is effective on newly infested small areas, but follow up will be needed for a few years



Creeping Charlie

- Creeping Charlie is also known as ground ivy
- It is a low growing perennial and thrives in shady areas
- Leaves are small, round, and scalloped and resemble those of a common geranium
- Lavender to blue flowers appear in the spring
- If crushed or mowed it gives off a minty-like smell
- Young, early patches can be pulled by hand



Violet

- Violets are often considered a weed in landscape areas
- Leaves are heart shaped
- Flowers are purple with five petals and are approximately the same height as the foliage
- Violets form dense, fibrous root systems making them difficult to control by pulling
- This weed is extremely difficult to manage



Kentucky bluegrass

- Kentucky Bluegrass is a common turfgrass used in lawns
- It can become a problem due to invasion from surrounding lawn areas
- Kentucky Bluegrass can be identified by its boat-shaped leaf tip
- The seedhead is a pyramidal panicle
- Small clusters can be pulled by hand



Smooth brome

- Smooth Brome is a grass that can grow as tall as 1-3 feet
- The leaf blades are 1/4 to 1/2 inch in width and have a grayish-blue color
- A W shaped wrinkle can also be found about halfway up the leaf
- Hand pulling is an effective control method for small areas



Dandelion

- Easily identified by bright yellow flowers
- Yellow flowers are followed by a white puffball seedhead
- Perennial weed with deep taproot
- Mow often or remove flowers to prevent the plant from seeding
- Use a specialized dandelion digging tool for hand removal



White clover

- Identifiable by trifoliate leaves (having 3 leaves or 3 leaflike parts)
- White flowers are also helpful in identification
- Perennial weed that spreads by creeping runners
- Use mulch to prevent infestations
- Hand pulling has a limited effect



Persian speedwell

- Persian speedwell is identifiable by small, light blue flowers
- The leaves are oppositely arranged, oval shaped with rounded teeth, and slightly hairy
- Persian speedwell grows in a prostrate or spreading manner
- Hand removal is a feasible eradication option if the plants are small and few



Prickly lettuce

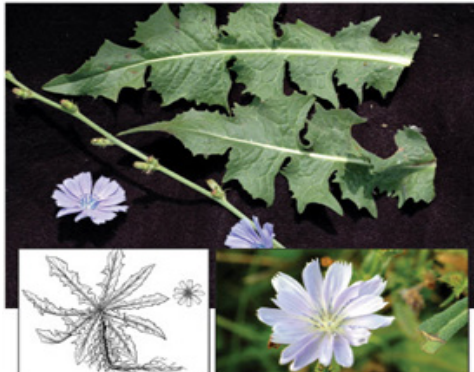
- Prickly lettuce looks like a lettuce plant and is also referred to as wild lettuce
- Hairs/prickles are visible along leaf margins and veins
- When cut, the plant emits a white milky sap
- Young plants can easily be controlled by pulling or hoeing

**Purple loosestrife**

- Purple loosestrife is an invasive species in Indiana
- It invades many wetland areas and overcrowds native species
- Purple loosestrife can grow up to 10 feet tall
- The leaves are lance shaped and opposite around the stem
- Pink to purple flowers are present from July to October on long spikes at the tops of the stems
- It spreads very rapidly due to its prolific seed production
- Small infestations can be controlled by removing all roots and underground stems
- Small segments of the stem can root and reestablish itself

**Queen Anne's lace**

- A biennial plant that can grow to be over 3 ft tall
- Bright white small flowers on top from June to August
- Occasional dark red flower in the center of the flower head
- Often found in road side soils and other waste soils
- Can be very aggressive
- Attracts predatory wasps
- Removing the seed heads early will help control future establishment

**Chicory**

- A perennial broadleaf weed
- Grows well in disturbed areas or waste grounds
- Rough, tooth-lobed leaves
- Large fleshy dark brown taproot
- Basal rosette leaves resemble Dandelion when not in bloom
- Difficult to fully remove taproot
- Mowing is recommended as this weed has trouble growing in dense turf

**Crown vetch**

- Perennial herb in the legume family
- Spreading, creeping stems that can reach 6 ft
- Dark, compound leaves with 15 – 25 leaflets
- Pea-like pink flowers cluster at the end of stocks
- Can spread through strong, branching root system
- Ability to climb makes it a difficult problem
- Mowing can control this weed if done often



Garlic mustard

- Biennial herb with triangular leaves
- Mature, 2nd year flowering plants can reach 3.5 ft
- Produce small, button-like white flowers, each with 4 petals
- Very aggressive and invasive in riparian areas
- Seeds last for years in soil, requiring long-term commitment to manage
- Hand removal is possible



Sweet clover

- Comes in two forms: yellow and white
- Biennial plant with alternate leaves on a short stalk
- “Bushy” growth up to 5 ft high, and very fragrant
- Shades out native species and is very aggressive
- Hand pulling is effective on smaller plants



Canadian goldenrod

- Perennial producing several unbranched stalks
- Bright yellow flowers form pyramid shape at the tops of stalks
- Lance shaped leaves
- Outcompetes native plants during successional growth, usually in old crop fields
- Strong root system that can be difficult to uproot
- There are many species of native, desirable goldenrod that are hard to distinguish from Canadian goldenrod



What is the White River Alliance?

The White River Alliance improves and protects water resources throughout Central Indiana. We are an alliance of diverse interests and organizations that work together to steward the river and its watershed. Learn how to get involved or become a member at www.thewhiteriveralliance.org.