



Hamilton County 2020 Invasive Plant Species Survey

conducted by
HIP Technical Committee
September, 2020



HIP 2020 Invasive Plant Species Survey Background

A primary task of the Hamilton County Invasives Partnership or any Indiana CISMA (Cooperative Invasives Species Management Area) is to identify the most problematic invasive species in its county.

Through identification, HIP participants and the community as a whole are better able to achieve their mission to mobilize land stewards to manage and eliminate invasive species in Hamilton County.

In addition to the survey's primary purpose, it also gathered input regarding:

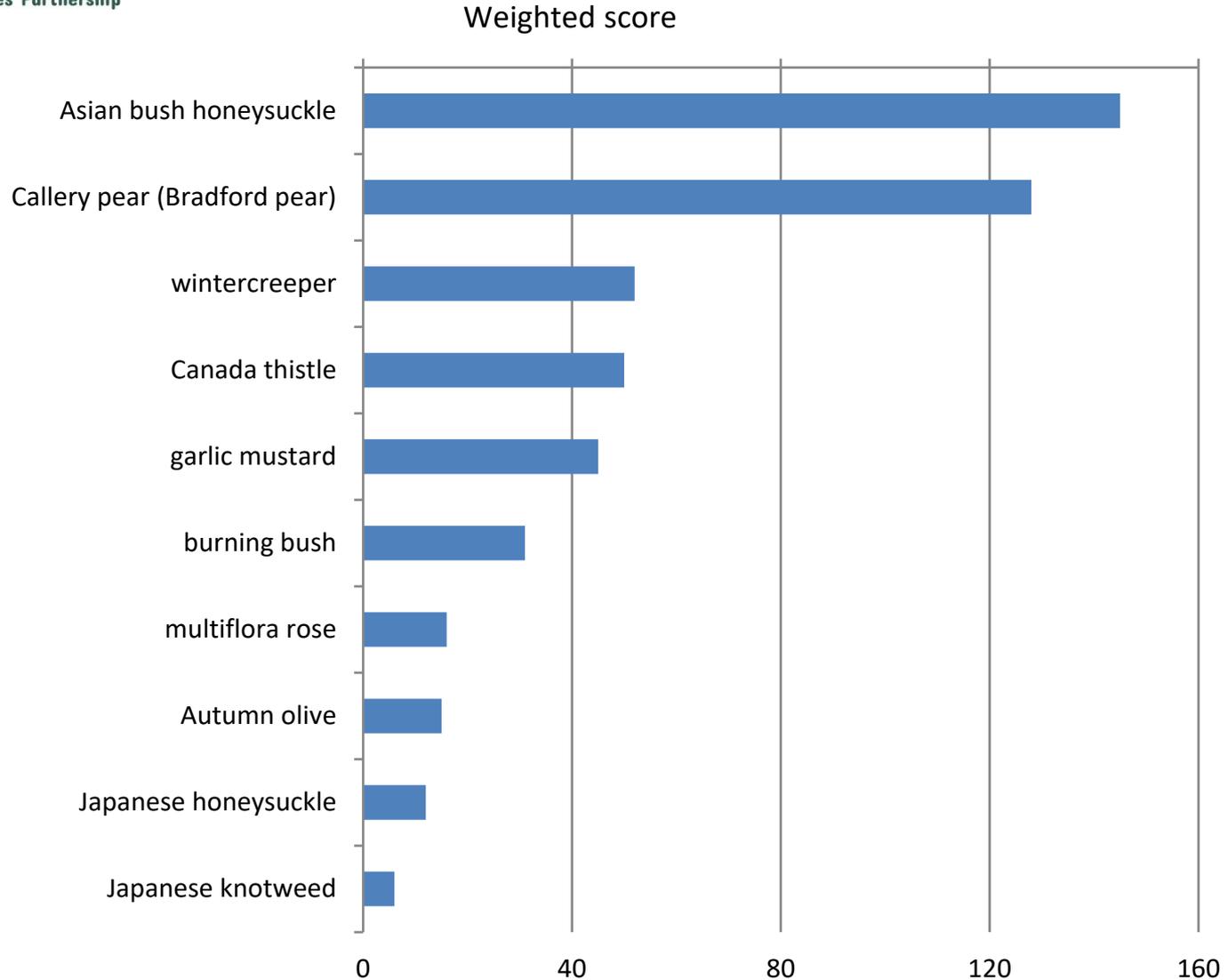
- *Type of area needing management
- *Interest in having an invasive species assessment
- *Most pressing invasive threat or challenge
- *Land owner status and professional association

The Results of the Survey are.....



Top Ten Invasive Plant Species in Hamilton County

Survey results were similar to the June 2020 sightings submitted to EDDMapS.





HIP 2020 Invasive Species Survey Methodology

Regarding the naming the most problematic species, the survey allowed the respondent to select species that they deemed “most problematic”. Criteria were not specified; the only restriction was that the plant be recognized as invasive per the definition in the Terrestrial Plant Rule.

We did not wish to limit the named species to a given list. Consequently, we did not employ a pull down menu but instead allowed the user the freedom to specify any species they desire. This freedom created issues because Google Forms treats “bush honeysuckle”, Bush honeysuckle, Asian bush honeysuckle and Lonicera spp. as different inputs. We did our best to group inputs to reflect the respondents’ intent.

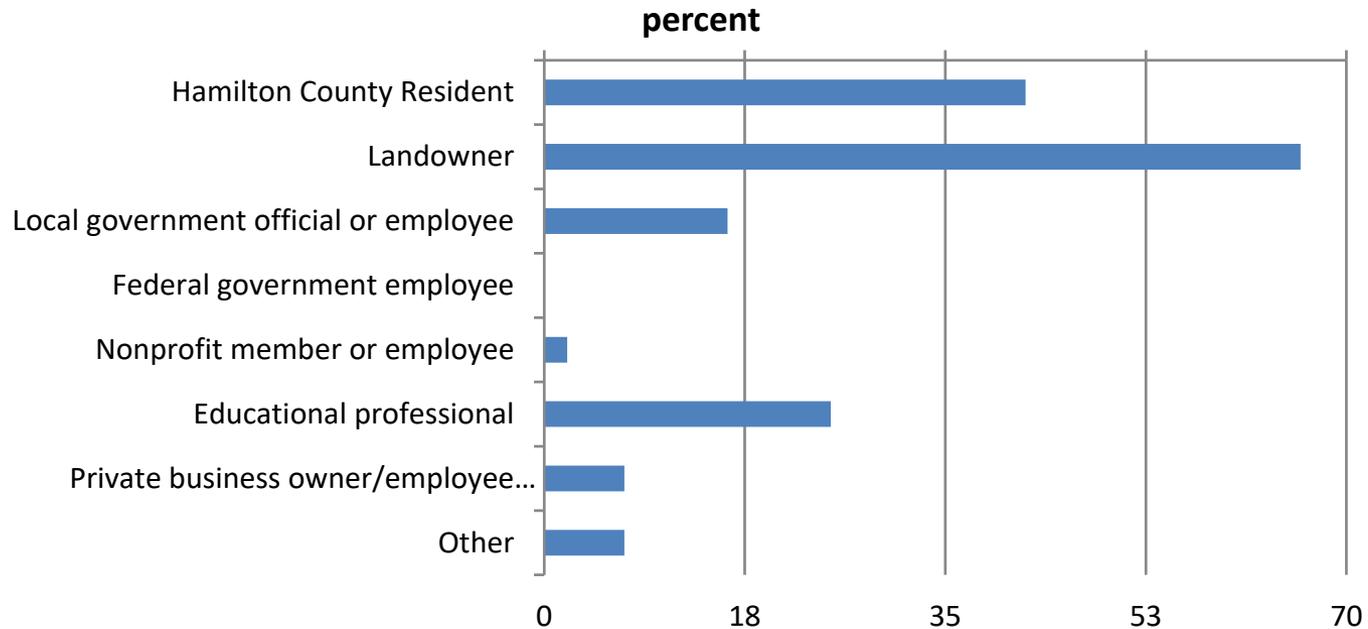
Each participant could name up to 5 species in rank order and most did. For the composite ranking votes for the #1 worst species were weighted by a factor of 5, votes for the 2nd worst species received a weighted score of 4, and so on. The weighed values were summed to create the overall scores. In the end, the weighting methodology did not significantly alter the results. The first 9 of the top 10 stood out in the # of responses and the ranking. A total of 30 species were named.

The 41 respondents included HIP members, general public that responded via social media, Master Gardeners, INPS members, HOA members, park managers, land owners, etc. Here are the questions and their answers.....

The survey is still open and can receive additional inputs.



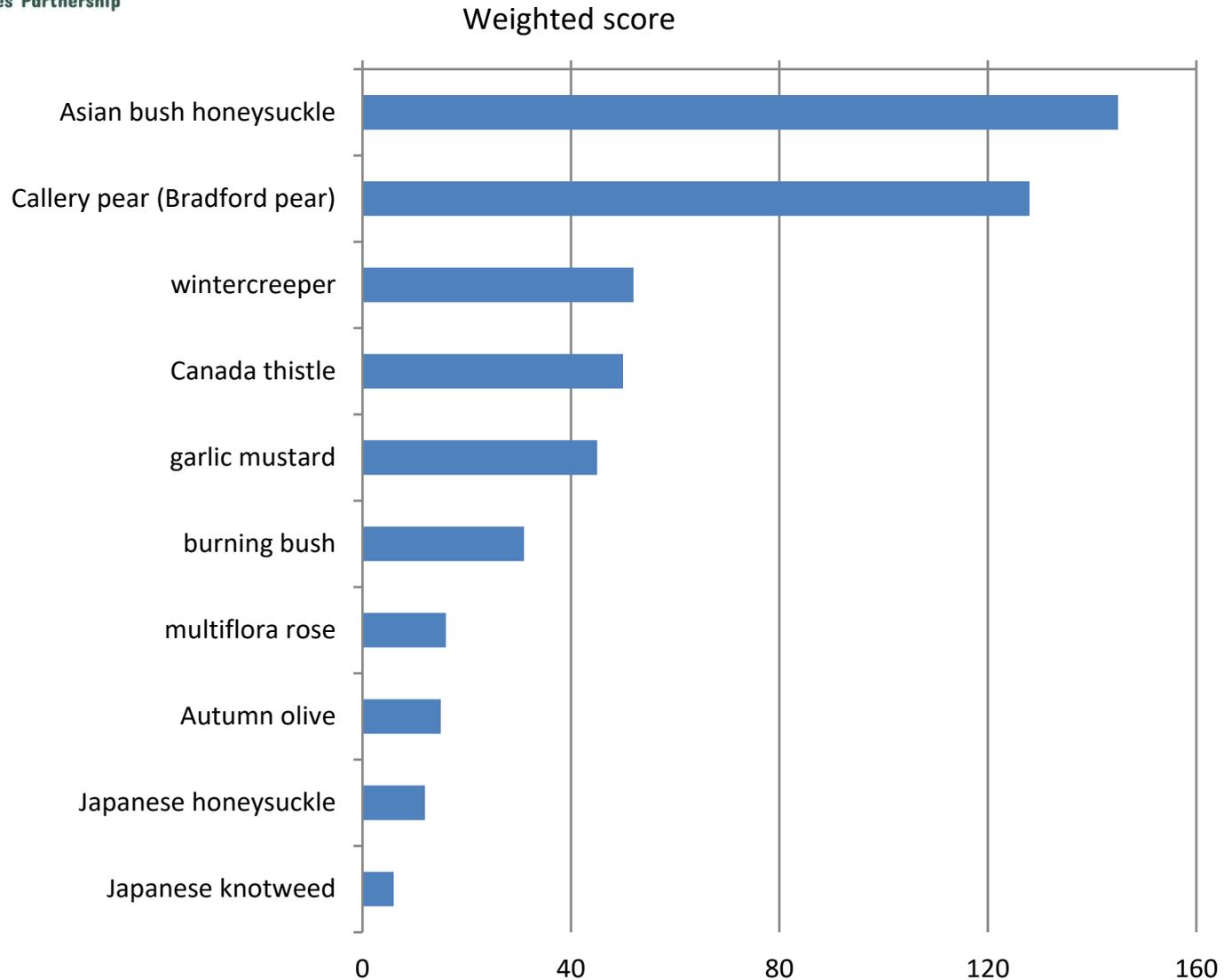
Q1 – I would describe myself as . . . (check all that apply)



Other: Land manager/community gardener, HC Master Gardener, homeschool parent, land manager



Q2 – 6: What are top invasive plant species that you feel are most harmful here in Hamilton County?





Q2 – 6: What are top invasive plant species that you feel are most harmful here in Hamilton County? (cont.)

Other:

chameleon plant, creeping Jenny, lesser celandine, lily of the valley, purple loosestrife, Japanese barberry, creeping Charlie, Japanese stilt grass, common teasel, bull thistle, Chinese privet, English ivy , milfoil, yarrow, crabgrass, white mulberry, tree of heaven, periwinkle

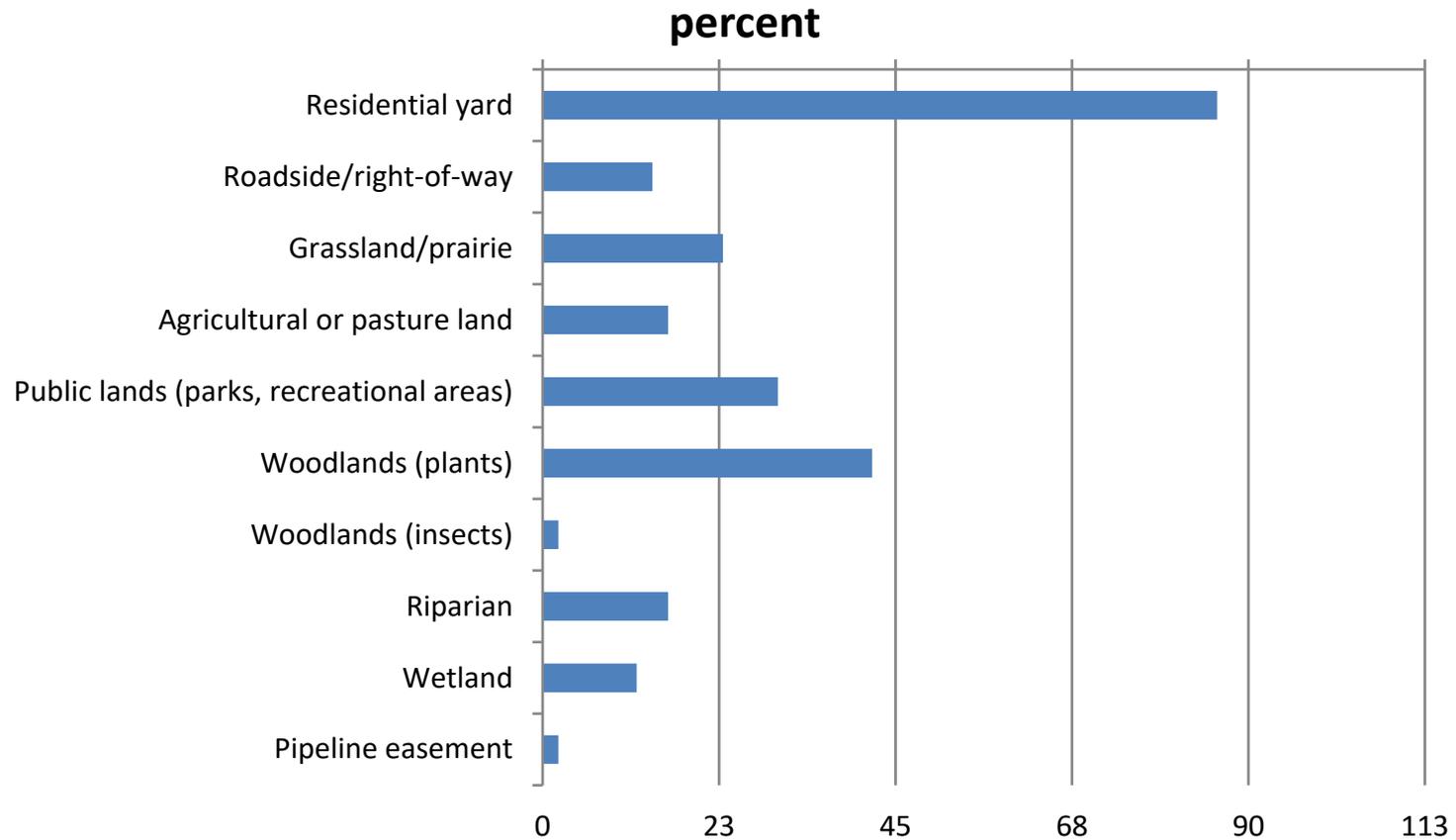


Q7a – Do you current manage invasive species on you property
as part of your job or as part of volunteer work?

Answer: 98% said yes

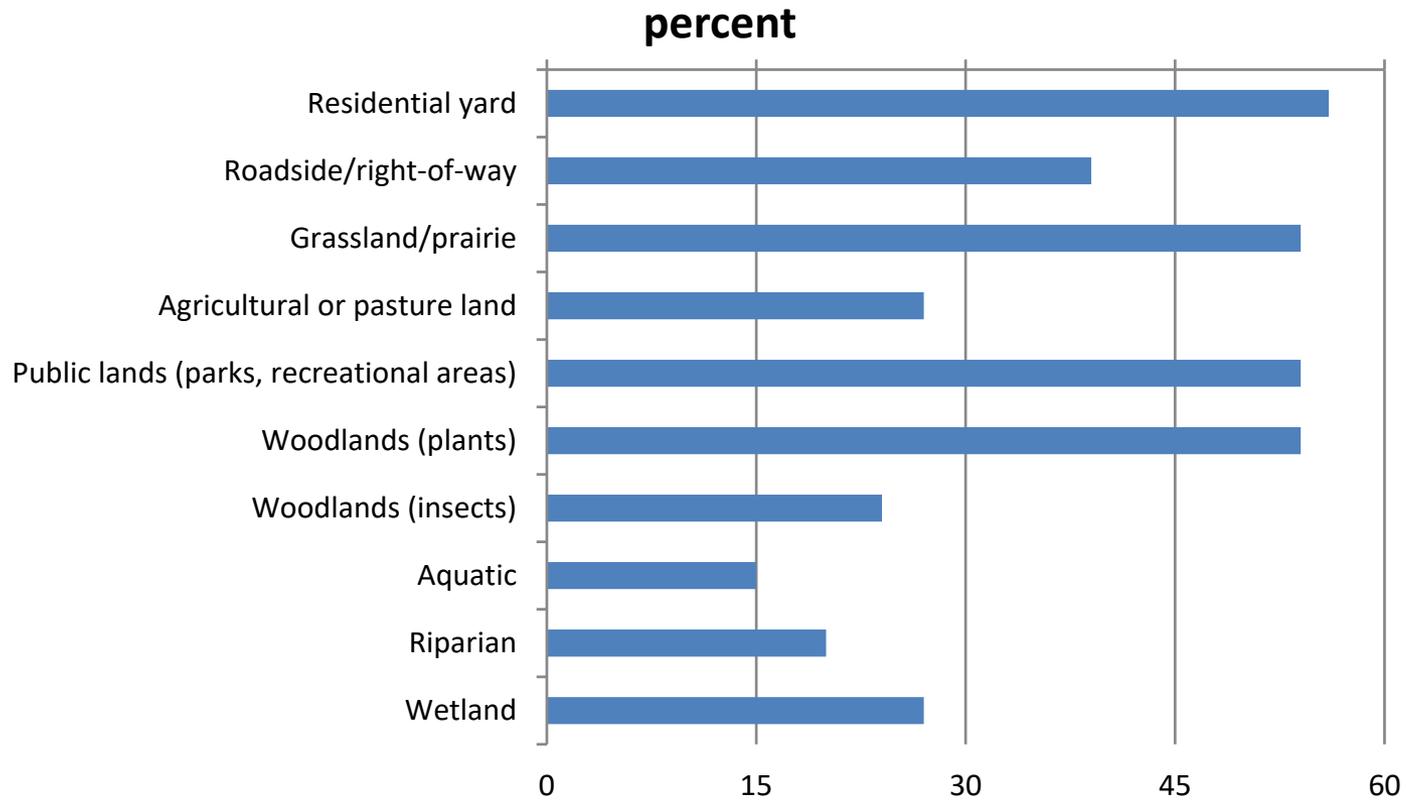


Q7b – If you answered YES, what type(s) of area(s) do you manage for invasives? (select all that apply)



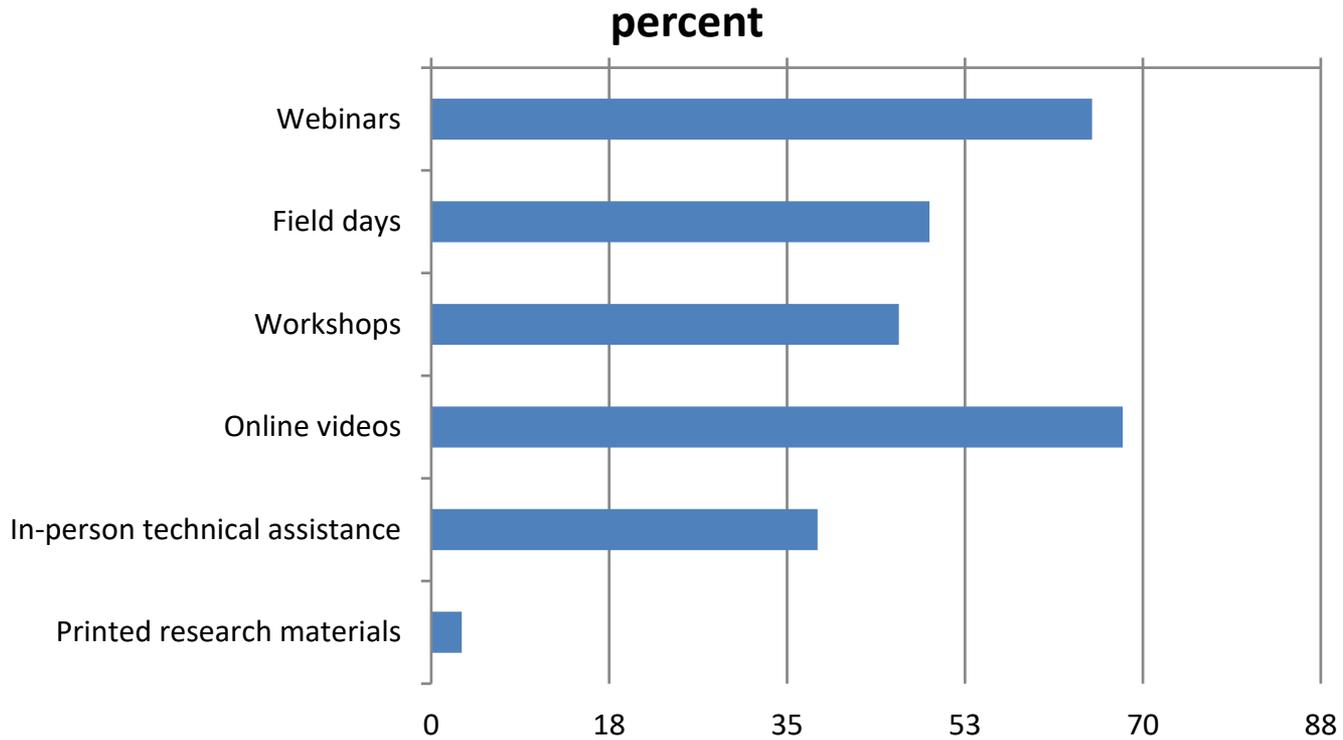


Q8 – In which type(s) of area(s) would you be interested in learning how to manage for invasives?
(select all that apply)



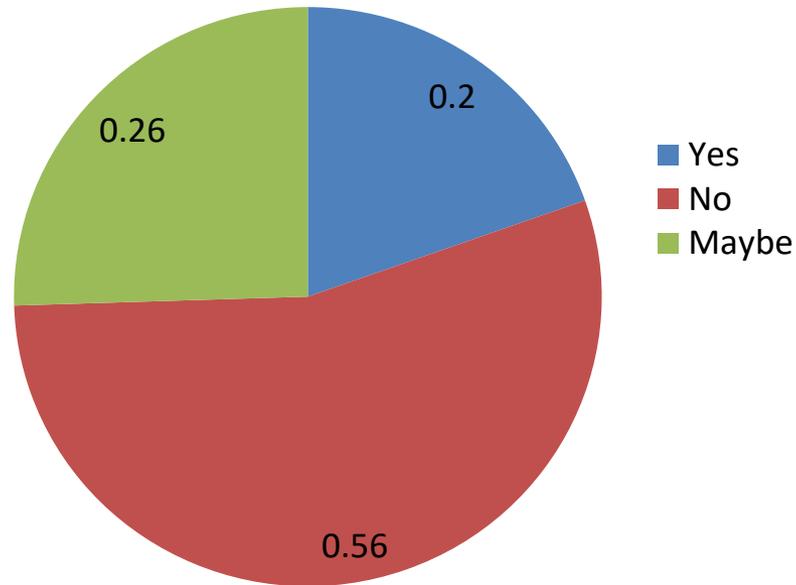


Q9 – Please select the preferred format(s) for technical training.



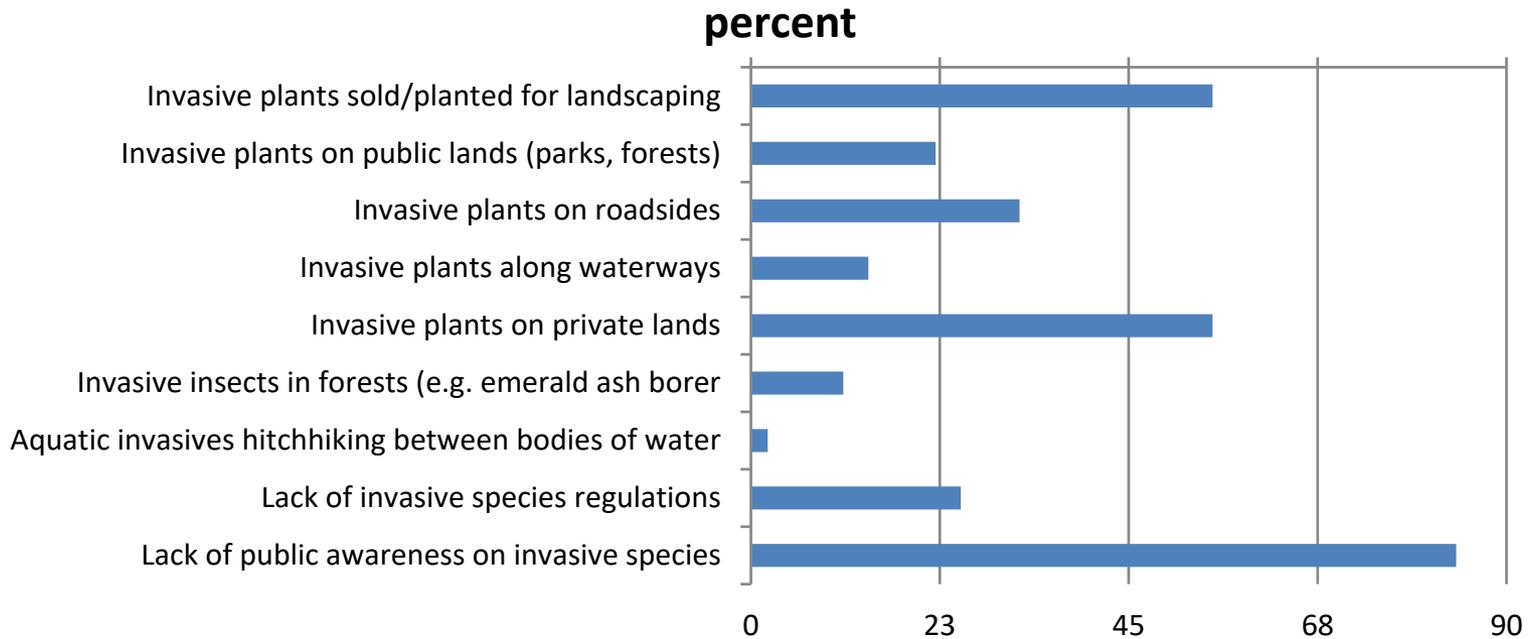


Q10 – Would you like an invasive species assessment of your property?





Q11 - Select 3 of the most pressing invasive threats or challenges that you see as the biggest concern in your area.





Respondents' Additional Comments or Suggestions

It's just difficult and ongoing time consuming activity to keep up with cutting back, pulling and keeping invasives off my land! Most entities do not control thistle, with tons of it along our public roadways and parks, other adjacent landowners do not try to control their honeysuckle, thistle, mulberry, etc. and that affects the quality of my hay, and the amount of time and effort I have to dedicate to eradicate invasives. I've been at it for years and have not been able to get to all of it as I have to prioritize my fields over woodlands and borders. Just try to do what I can do to make progress in the fight against invasives on my own property.

The Noblesville Township Trustee needs to be more aggressive when land owners are not controlling thistle on their property. I have had to have the Trustee contact my neighbor in person and with a letter for 4 years (2017-2020.) The first three years the neighbor mowed about 3 acres in a timely manner. This year the neighbor is not responding. More needs to be done to use the Trustees authority to require land owners to control their thistle.

Almost every fast food restaurant and strip mall seem to include invasive species plantings; namely burning bush and Japanese barberry. I'd love to see a campaign that educates and encourages these business to remove their invasive plantings, possibly with incentives.



Additional Comments or Suggestions (cont.)

They're all bad... it's just guessing to rank or pick the three worst.

Keep up with the awesome work of educating us on this!

Lack of public awareness is a huge concern.

An increase in commerce leads to a decrease in diversity. It's measurable.

Hard to prioritize but thanks for the efforts. Look forward to seeing the results. I'd be interested to contrast citizen response to biologist evaluation.



Hamilton Co. Invasives Partnership

HIP 2020 Invasive Species Survey Validation

After the survey was completed we contacted 3 professionals trained in forestry, ecology and biology to review the results. Their comments are below:

Lenny Farlee, Dept. of Forestry and Natural Resources, Hardwood Tree Improvement and Regeneration Center

I will answer your question about top problem species with some categories:

Top emerging species – Callery pear. The rate of this invasion is shocking and concerning.

Top environmental impact – Asian bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, autumn olive, wintercreeper

The others mentioned fall beneath these in my list only in that they tend to be less common, at least where I have worked.

I have seen properties that had major problems with each of these species and they can be terrible and difficult to manage as well.

Kristy Stultz, East Central Indiana Nursery Inspector and Compliance Office
IDNR - Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology

I'd say that's a good top 10 list. I can't think of anything that I would add to the list given where I am normally working in the county.

I don't get out into woodlots much so I don't see a lot of multiflora rose or autumn olive, but bush honeysuckle is awful everywhere in the state and I see more escaped callery pear in Hamilton County than I do anywhere else in my territory.

I do see a lot of English ivy escaping from editions into whatever wooded cover they have in the neighborhood, but again, if you're just looking for a top 10, it's a good list.

I spend most of my time doing nursery inspections and driving in Hamilton County so when I see/think about invasive species in that area, it's about ecological/environmental harm.



Responses from Specialists (continued)

Phillip Weldy, Stewardship Assistant, Central Indiana Land Trust

You are correct that I do not live in Hamilton County, but I do work in it. From what I've seen in Hamilton and other counties, Asian bush honeysuckle seems to be the number 1 most detrimental invasive. It is common from roadsides to natural areas, tends to dominate the understory thereby shading out the ground so few things grow and the soil is bare, and it out competes native plants that provide more nutritious food sources for birds. So all these ecological negatives coupled with the extensive spread of the species lead me to place it as the invasive with the worst impact in Hamilton County. I would probably follow up with callery pear since it is prolific in the sites in the county that I am familiar with and it grows and is spread extremely quickly. So from the areas in Hamilton county that I work with, I'd have to agree with your members. Garlic mustard would be a close third as bonus info. Hope this is helpful!