

Environmental Advisory Committee Update, November 18, 2013

Wee Wah Algae Bloom

The Wee Wah is looking pea green these days as it suffers from an algae bloom. Warm weather, low water level, and very little rain have combined in just the right way to create this situation. It will resolve as soon as we get some much needed rain!

News About Barberry, Garlic Mustard and Tick Born Illnesses

For years, we've all heard and read about the advisability of removing and not planting non-native invasive species. Now, there is scientific evidence that demonstrates a relationship between proliferation of ticks and Barberry and Garlic Mustard.

Deer do not eat these plants. Consequently, Barberry and Garlic Mustard are found growing in our forest understory in abundance. The Barberry is prickly, so ticks are "combed" out of the deer to land in a nice mulch of Barberry leaves to thrive in below. The white footed mouse finds safe haven there as well.

The roots of Garlic Mustard exude a substance that is poisonous to native plants and poisonous to a fungi that grows in the soil; a fungi known to kill ticks.

Further, the decreased numbers of plants in the understory caused by these chemicals in combination with excessive deer browse also contribute to storm water problems as there are fewer plants in the forest left to capture and filter rainwater.

This of course, is not welcome news. It clearly demonstrates that there no quick fix for managing the tick populations in our Village and environs. What to do?

First of all, the Village is continuing the deer culling program, coordinated by the Chief of Police.

Second, the DPW will begin removal of Barberry on Village properties once the ticks are dormant (below freezing weather).

Third, we are reaching out to various other organizations to help us create a plan for evaluating our forest understory and creating a management plan that will encourage native plants and trees to repopulate our properties.

Fourth, we encourage all of you to remove these invasives from your property. New York State's DEC has just issued a list of all invasives that will be illegal to purchase once the rules pass through a public comment period. Approval and enactment is expected by next Fall. Barberry is on that list.

Fifth, we are reaching out to other organizations in our community, like the Tuxedo Park Garden Club, to partner with us in bringing speakers to our community so that we can better educate ourselves about best practices for managing our properties.

Ticks and invasives do not respect property lines or political boundaries. We need to work together to improve our forest to protect our health and to preserve our water quality.