

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Moneywort

Lysimachia nummularia L.



Photo: Richard Old, www.invasive.org

Background:

This plant goes by many common names including creeping Jenny, creeping Charlie, creeping Joan, running Jenny, wandering Jenny and wandering sailor.

It was introduced from Europe and southwest Asia as an ornamental ground cover.

Range:

This plant can now be found through much of the U.S. particularly the east and west coasts and the Midwest (see map on right).

Description:

This herbaceous, low-growing perennial plant is part of the primrose family. It has evergreen to semi-evergreen leaves. The creeping stems can grow up to two feet long and form a mat-like growth. Leaves are opposite and oval in shape, resembling coins, hence its name. Small yellow flowers with small dark red spots bloom from June to August, but may not bloom at all.

Habitat:

This plant can grow in a variety of habitats but it grows best and poses the biggest threat in moist areas like wet meadows, swamps, stream banks and roadside ditches. It prefers rich, shaded soils.

Biology and Spread:

This plant spreads vegetatively by its creeping stems, as well as by small seeds that are located within capsular fruits. These fruits are likely dispersed by flood waters and stormwater runoff. How much this plant's seeds are spread by animals is not fully known, but it is likely.



Photo: Les Mehrhoff, IPANE



Map courtesy of USDA PLANTS Database

Ecological Threat:

Not much is known about its direct impacts to the environment but there is concern that dense mats of this plant may take over habitat for more desirable native plant species.

How to Control this Species:

Prevention

The easiest way to prevent the spread of this species is to stop planting it, manage existing infestations and minimize disturbance to forests, wetlands and other habitats. When prevention fails, there are two control options:

Manual

The plant can be hand pulled, but all stems and stem fragments should be removed to prevent the stems from re-rooting . Planting native grasses can help to shade out this plant. Mowing is not effective since moneywort grows so close to the ground.

Chemical

Several herbicides are effective in controlling moneywort. Because this plant usually grows in or near wetlands, make sure that the herbicide is approved for use in wetlands. Rodeo is one such herbicide that may be effective. Be sure to follow all label directions and state requirements when using any herbicide.

Reference:

USDA Forest Service: *Weed of the Week* factsheet for Moneywort:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/monewort.pdf

For More Information:

To learn more about invasive plants in Pennsylvania and the northeast, here are some useful resources:

DCNR *Invasive Species Site*:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/index.htm>

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, National

Park Service: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>

Invasive Plants Field and Reference Guide, U.S. Forest

Service: http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf



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