

BROADLANDS

MANAGING INVASIVE SPECIES IN BROADLANDS: TREE OF HEAVEN & BERMUDA GRASS

August 2025

The Broadlands HOA is actively working to protect our natural areas by treating two highly invasive species: Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and Bermuda Grass (*Cynodon dactylon*). These species pose serious threats to native ecosystems, infrastructure, and even agriculture.

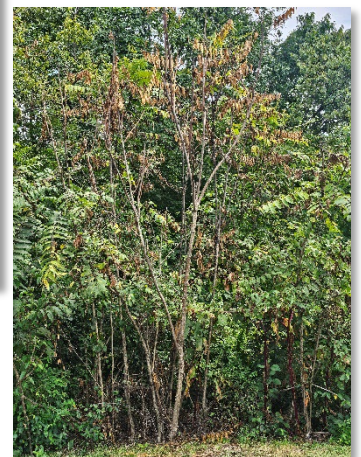
Tree of Heaven: A Host for Spotted Lanternflies

Tree of Heaven is a fast-growing, aggressive tree that spreads rapidly through seeds and root suckers. Simply cutting it down is not effective—in fact, doing so can make the problem worse. The root system responds to cutting by sending up multiple new shoots, often resulting in 10 or more new trees in place of the original.

Tree of Heaven is also a primary host for the invasive spotted lanternfly, a destructive pest that threatens local crops such as grapes, apples, and hardwoods. Controlling Tree of Heaven is a critical step in reducing the spread of this harmful insect.

To combat this, our team is using the hack and squirt method, a targeted approach where small cuts are made in the tree's bark and herbicide is applied directly into the wounds. This allows the chemical to penetrate the tree's vascular system and kill it from the inside out. You may spot dying trees in the community's common areas and wonder why they haven't been removed. Only after the poison has fully penetrated the entire root system should the tree be removed.

Potomac Tree and Shrub is actively monitoring treated trees for signs of die-back and removing them when appropriate. We expect to remove 250–300 trees per year as part of this ongoing effort.



Bermuda Grass: Invasive and Rapidly Spreading

Bermuda grass is known for its aggressive spreading habit. It spreads both above ground through stolons (runners) and below ground through rhizomes, as well as by seed. This means it can quickly fill in bare spots and expand its territory in a lawn. While Bermuda Grass is commonly used in lawns in warmer climates, it becomes invasive when it spreads into our cooler-climate grass blends and mulched beds. It forms dense mats that choke out our fescue-type grasses and is extremely difficult to eradicate due to its deep, resilient root system.

HLS is applying non-selective herbicides to target Bermuda Grass in affected areas and prevent further spread. You will spot many of these areas where the grass has turned yellow on the median islands along our main roadways.

What to Expect

Residents may notice areas where trees and grass are dying back and turning yellow or brown—this is a normal and expected part of the treatment process. Attached are some photos to help you identify what treated areas look like, so you can distinguish between intentional die-back and unrelated plant health issues.

How You Can Help

- Avoid planting invasive species in your own landscaping.
- Report sightings of Tree of Heaven or Bermuda Grass in common areas to info@broadlandshoa.com.
- Stay on trails and avoid disturbing treated areas while restoration is underway.

Thank you for your support in helping us preserve Broadlands' natural beauty and ecological health.

