



## WINTER INVASIVES CONTROL GIVES WAY TO, WELL, SPRING INVASIVES CONTROL!

All winter and into spring, our volunteers have been rolling back infestations of invasive alien plants in parks throughout Fairfax County, Virginia.

During the first quarter of 2009, our volunteers invested over 2,000 hours of their time cutting and yanking invasives out of Roundtree, Long Branch Stream Valley, Flag Run Stream Valley, Luria, and Wilburdale Parks, and the Marie Butler Leven Preserve. We've been working at several of these parks for years; our oldest invasives-control projects are at Wilburdale Park, started in 2002, and the Marie Butler Leven Preserve, begun in 2004.

Local plant geeks may be pleased to learn that, thanks to all this work, northern Virginia has a slightly reduced burden of the following vegetable interlopers, listed here by form. One tree: paperbark mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*); four shrubs: Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*), burningbush (*Euonymus alatus*), common privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*); five vines: English ivy (*Hedera helix*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Oriental bitter-sweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), porcelainberry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), and wintercreeper euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*); and one herby creeper thing: Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*).

As anyone who has ever tried it is likely to affirm, invasives control can be kind of a depressing business. Invasive alien plant infestations

are often dense, extensive, and bolstered by formidable soil seedbanks and root systems that guarantee years of resprouting. In such places, it can be hard to resist the notion that the battle has basically been lost.

But after seven years of struggle in various badly infested parks, we have worked out a simple system that is yielding measurable and fairly stable results, even in some very unpromising situations. Our approach in brief: first, large numbers of energetic volunteers, like the people shown above, do the rough initial work on an infestation. We reinforce our volunteers with occasional staff labor directed at the least appealing aspects of the task (read: root removal). On some sites, our "amateur expert" weeders comb through valuable native ground-layer plants for alien weeds. And sometimes, in collaboration with the landowner, we contract with an experienced professional firm for careful, spot application of herbicide on certain types of infestations.

It isn't easy but it works! Our results to date are most evident at the Marie Butler Leven Preserve, where we have achieved nearly complete eradication of all invasives from about 1 acre of woodland, substantial suppression over another 3 acres, and the clearing of invasive alien vines from all 17 acres of the Preserve's forest canopy. Of course, we are nowhere near declaring victory at the Preserve, or at any of our other sites, but progress is increasingly evident and our work continues to pick up speed. And as we clear, we revegetate, as necessary, with native plants grown at our Wild Plant Nursery.

Our recent progress would not have been possible without the help of our many collaborators—from eight high schools, two universities, one scout troop, and four civic and environmental groups. And of course we're grateful to all our usual rugged, outdoorsy volunteers who continue to make the Sangha such a presence in the field!

**Photo:** In February, volunteers cleared an invasive tangle from our Canterbury Woods planting, along Long Branch stream.

**On line:** For more coverage of invasives control last winter and early this spring, check our News page for the relevant months, at [earthsangha.org/news.html](http://earthsangha.org/news.html).

# IN GRATITUDE TO OUR MAJOR DONORS FOR 2008

We thank everyone who has given to the Sangha, in whatever form. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the following people and organizations, who made major donations to our work last year. The Sangha has drawn great strength from their generosity and vision. May the spirit of their gifts continue to live within our work and practice.

## Over \$5,000

The Fairfax County Tree Preservation and Protection Fund (\$20,000)  
The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region (\$17,282)  
The Shared Earth Foundation (\$10,000)  
The Prince Charitable Trusts (\$10,000)  
The Virginia Department of Forestry (\$5,470)

## \$2,000 – \$5,000

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
The Dominion Foundation  
Cynthia Irmer & Bruce Engelbert  
Dennis & Allison O'Connor  
Thomas Ventre

## \$1,000 – \$1,999

The Bank of America Foundation  
Chris & Lisa Bright  
Richard Haeuber & Amy Frey  
Ashley Todd Mattoon & David Leopold  
Florence Gene Orr  
Lynn Tsvkov  
Joshua Wenz

## \$500 – \$999

William & Helen Ackerman  
Anonymous  
Bob & Nora Jordan  
Andrew & Mary Beth Keegan  
Christian & Kris Lansing  
Valerie & Peter Nye  
Bob & Gail Weigl

## \$250 – \$499

Marc Eric Ottersbach &  
Cornelia Bammesberger  
Eileen Barthelmy  
Elizabeth Burke  
George & Theresa Chianese  
Margaret Garigan  
Nancy Hadley & Kerry Lyon  
Katherine Huston & Sylvia Daniels

Cecile Lethem & Jennifer Groppe  
Jody Marshall  
Carolyn & Robert Mattoon  
Charles Mills  
Cindy Porter  
Larry Reavis  
Sorooptimist International of Woodbridge &  
Carli Tacey  
Keith Tomlinson

## \$100 – \$249

Susan Abraham  
David Berry  
Stanley Burgiel & Jeneen Piccirro  
Carol & Richard Duval  
Jeremy Edwards  
Kelley Ellsworth  
Stanley & Judith Feder  
Alan Ford & Elaine Braccio  
Edmund & Lynn Foster  
Barbara Freggens  
Catherine Garigan  
Janice Geiger  
Harrison Glasgow

Julia Goss  
Joanne & David Hardison  
Richard Hartley  
Mary & John Johnson  
Kathleen Joseph  
J. Hovey & Mary Ellen Kemp  
John & Duckju Kim  
Karen & Robert Knopes  
Mary Ann Lawler  
Stephen & Jay Lewis  
Andrew Luse  
Michael & Heather Marano  
Mimi & Steve McKindley-Ward  
Susan McLaughlin

Jon D. McMaster  
Daphne Miller & Russell Sniady  
Pamela Miller  
Wendy Mills  
Laura Mol  
Lawrence & Patricia Molumby  
Marianne Mooney & Joseph Sasfy  
Philaine & David Nexon  
James Palmer  
Kevin Parker  
Robert Pearson & Carolyn Grafton  
Doug Petersen  
R. Michael Redman & Helen Nardini  
Stephen Rickard

Donald Robinson &  
Elizabeth Ketz-Robinson  
Marlene Sandhu  
Ken & Linda Schatz  
Sally Scime & Chris Engnoth  
Sally & Gerald Sieracki  
David Sullivan  
Sidney & Deborah Tronic  
Joanne Wagner  
Phil & Rieko Wagoner  
Ana Walker  
William Russel Watts  
Mark Willcher  
Nancy & Howard Zimmerman

# EARTH SANGHA

## BUDDHIST VALUES IN ACTION

The Earth Sangha is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity dedicated to environmental action as an expression of the Buddhist way of life.

### Want to donate or join the Sangha?

You can support our work by becoming a member. Membership starts at \$35 per year. Your donation is tax-deductible.

We believe this list to be accurate and complete but would greatly appreciate any corrections. Our apologies to our United Way and CFC donors! We receive your donations in aggregate form and cannot usually trace them back to you specifically, so you may be more anonymous than you intended!

Our mailing address is: Earth Sangha, 10123 Commonwealth Blvd., Fairfax, VA 22032-2707.

Comprehensive program information is available on our web site: [earthsangha.org](http://earthsangha.org).

### Want to volunteer or meditate with us?

We work with volunteers at our nursery and our field sites in northern Virginia and DC. We hold regular sittings in Old Town, Alexandria, at 211 King Street, third floor, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, 7:00-9:00. For more information on either volunteering or sitting, call Lisa Bright at (703) 764-4830.

The background photo above was taken in April 2006 and shows Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) blooming in Cub Run Stream Valley Park in Fairfax County, Virginia.

### The Acorn

The *Acorn*, an occasional publication of the Earth Sangha, is created with "print on demand" technology, which consumes far less energy and materials than does conventional printing. This paper is 100% post-consumer waste recycled, process chlorine-free, and manufactured entirely with wind-generated electricity. This issue © copyright 2009, Earth Sangha.



## AT MEADOWOOD, THE BIG SITE BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

On Sunday, April 5, we broke ground on our new four-acre restoration site at the Meadowood Recreation Area, on the Mason Neck peninsula of northern Virginia. (Context for distant readers: relate “peninsula” to Potomac River.) Meadowood is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), an agency within the Department of the Interior. Our work on this site is part of a “challenge cost-share partnership” with the BLM.

Most of Meadowood’s 800 acres are covered by magnificent beech and oak-hickory forests, but in several places, the forests give way to large horse pastures. Our site is a section of one of those pastures. Since last November, we have been working with BLM staff on a plan to transform the site into a kind of window on the ecology of the local coastal plain. The plan calls for sample patches of several different native-plant communities: two forest types, an herbaceous meadow, a narrow, undulating “river of grass,” and tracts of woody oldfield. (Woody oldfield is meadow that has been colonized by young trees and shrubs—an important habitat type that is increasingly rare in the DC area.) Besides the plantings, the site will include stone check-dams (to help control stormwater run-off), interpretive and botanical signage, and a wheelchair-accessible trail.

All this ecological variety should pay off for animals as well as plants. Birds, amphibians, small forest mammals,

**Photos:** Above, a young planter wanders through a wilderness of tree tubes and marker flags at our big Meadowood site. At right, BLM Natural Resources Specialist Jinx Fox (far right) chats with a member of GMU’s Alpha Phi Omega, a community service fraternity.

**On line:** We’re planning a Meadowood page for our web site. Watch for it under the DC Area menu, at [earthsangha.org](http://earthsangha.org).

**Disclaimer:** The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the US Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the US Government.

various native insects—all these creatures should eventually find a home within the site.

Our April 5 planting was just a start. We put in about 175 tree seedlings to begin establishing a tree canopy in those parts of the site destined for forest. The work was done by the Sangha’s own volunteers and by fellow planters from Friends of Meadowood and the George Mason University chapter of the Alpha Phi Omega community service fraternity. (Lake Braddock Secondary School, our other major partner on this site, will start work on it a little later this spring.) So far so good—but of course the site will require thousands of plants before it begins to fill out, as any gardener would readily surmise!

This pasture area is the second of three sites that the Sangha is currently engaging at Meadowood. The first site lies nearby and was first planted in May 2008. Eventually, we’ll merge these two sites by planting the strip of intervening land. The third site is a riparian area along Thompson Creek, deep within Meadowood’s forest. Changes in the creek have raised the water table and killed many trees; in May, we’ll put in a selection of native wet-soil species to help the forest adapt.



# TREE BANK HISPANIOLA



Gaspar, our man on the scene.

Typical deforested, eroding, nutrient-leaching, farmer-busting Dominican border-country hillside.

## Help us put the Tree Bank on wheels!

Our Tree Bank needs a pickup truck. The Tree Bank works on the Dominican side of the Dominican Republic – Haiti border to restore native forest and improve tree crops; our work advances conservation in this global biodiversity hotspot and boosts the incomes of the impoverished farmers who live there.

Under the direction of Gaspar Pérez Aquino, a local farmer who runs the Tree Bank Nursery, we've made considerable progress since the program began in 2006. We now have 11 native tree species in production, as well as a veritable supermarket of orchard trees—citrus, avocado, cocoa, coffee, and so on. All these trees are free to local farmers. We've also started six native-forest restoration sites and we hope to begin work on several more this year.

But our trucklessness is now a major obstacle to expansion. Actually, it's three obstacles:

1. At present, we have to pay a delivery fee whenever we move material into or out of our Tree Bank Nursery. Our project area is remote and mountainous, so the delivery often ends up costing as much as the material itself. If we had a truck, we could operate and expand our nursery much more efficiently.

2. During the planting season, there are sometimes no trucks at all to be rented, because of the high demand for transport at that time—so we're losing planting opportunities. If we had a truck, we could plant thousands more native trees every year.

The pickup at right is owned by a Dominican federal agency, the General Administration for Frontier Development. They're supposed to improve the lives of border-region people like our farmers. One way in which they could do this would be to hand that truck over to Gaspar, but we consider this an unlikely move.

**On line:** Read more about the Tree Bank at: [earthsangha.org/tb/tbmsn.html](http://earthsangha.org/tb/tbmsn.html).

3. We cannot market our farmers' fruit. To move their fruit to market, our farmers must rely on the trucks of regional buyers who, of course, end up with much of the profit. If we had a truck, our farmers could transport the fruit themselves, and pocket more of the proceeds.

We've got to get that truck! A used pickup costs about \$10,000. (We have to buy it in the Dominican Republic; shipping is too expensive.) If you'd like to help, make a check out to "Earth Sangha," write "Tree Bank Truck" on the memo line, and send it to us at Earth Sangha, 10123 Commonwealth Blvd., Fairfax VA 22032. We'll send you a receipt. Donations are tax deductible.

Typical recent-issue gov't pickup: new, upscale, option-laden, dent-free, and weirdly clean. Not quite within our budget.

Dominican government rural development guy. Don't know if he's typical or not.

