

Wildscape Update John Dycus



On the front lines of the war on privet.

After the first freeze almost everything in the wildscape goes dormant, so most of what remains green is privet, signifying (drum

roll) it's privet pulling time again. Privet, surely you know by now, is an Asian plant that, left unchecked, grows rapidly and could kill the entire post oak woodland. The native wildflowers and understory plants would be crowded out as the privet becomes so thick it blocks the light, preventing germination of the acorns and seeds that fall to replace the older trees as they die out.

Privet is thickest along the creek's moist banks. While immature privet pulls easily, established privet requires the hard-core orange Weed Wrench. The larger plants must be cut and the stumps

planted with stump killer, which is about 90 percent effective.

After battling it for eight years, the impassioned wildscape privet eradicators (IWPEs) have the last of it in their sights. The IWPEs came out in force for the first Saturday workday, February 2.

They, Citizen Foresters and indentured volunteers from Tarrant County Juvenile Services planted 35 understory trees, mostly in the one-acre erosion area, and they pulled. Led by Melanie Migura of Citizen Foresters, volunteers pruned branches overhanging the trails, and they pulled some more.

Arlington Parks & Rec plans to pile-drive the biggest remaining privet soon.

*Oh.
It's.
Pullin' time again.
Yer gonna wrench me.*

*I can see by that
"devil vine!" look
in yer eye.*

*I can tell by
the way you
gas that chainsaw.*

*It won't be long
before it's pullin' time.*

A second Saturday workday this month, on Feb. 23, should seal the deal.

So what is an exotic invasive plant anyway? It's any species that is not native to the ecosystem and that likely will cause economic or environmental harm. Exotic invasive costs in the United States are estimated at \$130 billion a year, and the

pest plants threaten nearly half of the U.S. endangered native plant species.

In Texas, privet and Japanese honeysuckle have taken over large parts of the native woodlands. For information on invasive plants visit the internet sites texasinvasives.org or tpwd.state.tx.us.



Privet pullers, left and below, keep fighting the good fight while lots of small trees were planted in the erosion area during the last Saturday workday. Fort Worth Forester Melanie Migura, right, turned up to help with tree pruning, and Molly made everyone take a break and eat healthy snacks.

