

[Invasive Plant Management in Bradford County](#)

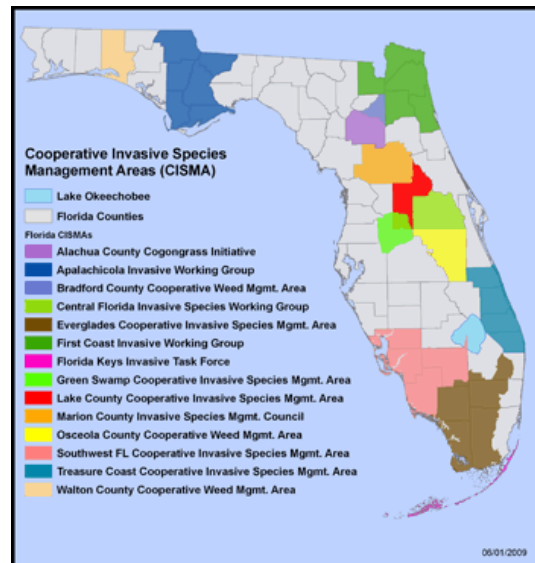
Locally, volunteers along with the Bradford Soil & Water Conservation District, Florida Division of Forestry, the Alligator Creek Garden Club and The Bradford County Extension Service groups work together in the fight to eradicate exotic plants from our natural lands. Members from these groups work together to educate people about invasive plants and participate in plant eradication activities.

Local efforts are coordinated with efforts of the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (<http://www.floridainvasives.org/cismas.html>); being listed as the Bradford County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). This organization links many agencies charged with managing exotic plants so that efforts can be coordinated with maximum efficiency. According to Paul Still from the Bradford Soil & Water Conservation District, Bradford County received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Pulling Together Initiative (PTI) grant in 2008, which was the first step to forming this CWMA.

The formation of the CWMA has resulted in several area workshops focused on educating Bradford residence on how to identify and eradicate invasive plants. The Plant Identification Tour and Air Potato Roundup scheduled for January 9th and 16th are two examples of upcoming events. The group is planning on continuing to organize these kinds of activities throughout the coming year.



Barbara Searcy, Paul Still, April Searcy, Kathleen McNamara and Jim DeValerio harvest Ardisia seed in the Alligator Creek wetland.



Although controlling all invasive plants is important, one plant in particular should be causing alarm within our community – *particularly with hunters because your sport depends on natural forages being available for wildlife to feed*. The plant is known as Japanese climbing fern and, although it is a relatively new introduction, it is rapidly spreading in our local forests. This, fern-like vine has spores that are spread very efficiently by the wind. This plant grows so aggressively it can cover entire trees in addition to becoming a dominant ground cover.

According to Florida Invasive Species Partnership philosophy we are to *“Think Locally and Act Neighborly”* since *“Invasive Exotic Species Know No Boundaries”*. This illustrates the importance of controlling all of the weeds in a location. Often times it is necessary to approach the landowner of neighboring property and ask them if they will join in the effort – otherwise the weed will come right back from the foothold left unchecked. Accordingly, the Bradford County Cooperative Weed Management Area is joining statewide efforts by helping to control air potato.

Submitted by Jim DeValerio, University of Florida / Bradford County Extension