

**Tree Planting and Preservation Fund Mini-Grant
Offered by Audubon Society of Northern Virginia's Audubon at Home Program and
the Plant NOVA Natives Campaign**

Requirements Information Sheet

10 Communities in Fairfax County will be awarded mini-grants of \$3000 each which they can use to pay for removal of invasive plants that are a threat to trees in either landscaped or natural areas. Expenses are expected to be for the services of landscape professionals to remove invasives. The communities can fulfill their \$1500 match either with money or with volunteer labor. The \$3000 mini-grant and \$1500 match is sufficient to make a noticeable improvement in both the habitat value and appearance of a common area that has been overrun by invasive plants.

Eligibility

Applicants' communities must be not-for-profit community associations or faith communities with commonly owned open space, in Fairfax County. The Board must approve the application.

Grant Funds Disbursement

Funds will be disbursed to the Community on a reimbursement basis as documentation and expense receipts are submitted.

Professional Landscaping Companies

We encourage communities to engage their current landscaping companies in the removal work to support ongoing invasives control for the community. Educating the existing company will increase the number of companies in our region that can offer invasive control services, especially of the invasive vines that are threatening the native trees. In common areas where a lower level of expertise will suffice, such as those that simply need cut stump treatment of invasive vines on trees or uprooting of easily identified plants such as Multiflora Rose, communities can handle it with a combination of volunteer labor to do the cutting or pulling and a certified pesticide applicator to apply the herbicide.

Should the job call for a higher level of experience and expertise, a list of Invasive Plant Removal Contractors that specialize in invasive plant removal in Northern Virginia may be found on the on the Plant NOVA Natives website here

<https://www.plantnovanatives.org/invasive-plant-management>

Matching the Grant with Volunteer Labor

We encourage the use of volunteer labor, if such is available, as a way of meeting the match so that residents can gain first-hand experience of the difficulties posed by invasive plants and a sense of the value of paying people to do the work in the future.

Volunteer hours may be deployed to count toward the \$1500 matching funding. The hourly rate will be in line with the Department of Forestry at \$29.95 per person hour. These volunteers must be trained to identify the invasive plants to be removed, provided with appropriate tools for mechanical removal, and report their hours on the project. They must not handle herbicides.

Invasives Removal Guidelines

Invasives should be removed as recommended for the specific species of invasive plant. An information page and information sheets will be provided for the targeted invasives on your property.

When herbicide use is called for, the application method and mixture should follow the expert recommendations for that species. Volunteers are not allowed to use herbicides.

Education on Invasives.

An important part of doing the work of removing invasives is to educate communities and their members about the problems caused by invasive plants in general, the particular need to remove invasive tree species, and invasive plants that threaten our native trees. Though the grant does not include funds for planting native alternatives once the invasives are removed, it is important to mention native alternatives that communities and private property owners can plant to improve the appearance and wildlife value of their properties.

Communities will be required to display a sign that we will provide: "Invasive plant control area. Please don't plant the non-native species that damage our ecosystem." and including a QR code linking to an information page on invasive plant control.

Training for Volunteers and Landscaping Companies

Those communities will need to train the workers, whether paid or unpaid, in control techniques as well as in identification of the plants and how to distinguish them from native look-alikes. Plant NOVA Trees has developed videos and other materials to train workers. Find these resources here <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/invasive-plant-management>

Your community must formally request a **Pre-Application Visit** by an Audubon at Home or Fairfax Master Naturalist volunteer to help you identify invasive plants and trees on your site and help your community come up with an **Invasives Control Plan** for multi-year invasives control. You may submit your request for a Pre-Application Visit here <https://audubonva.org/tppf-grant>

Invasives Control Plan

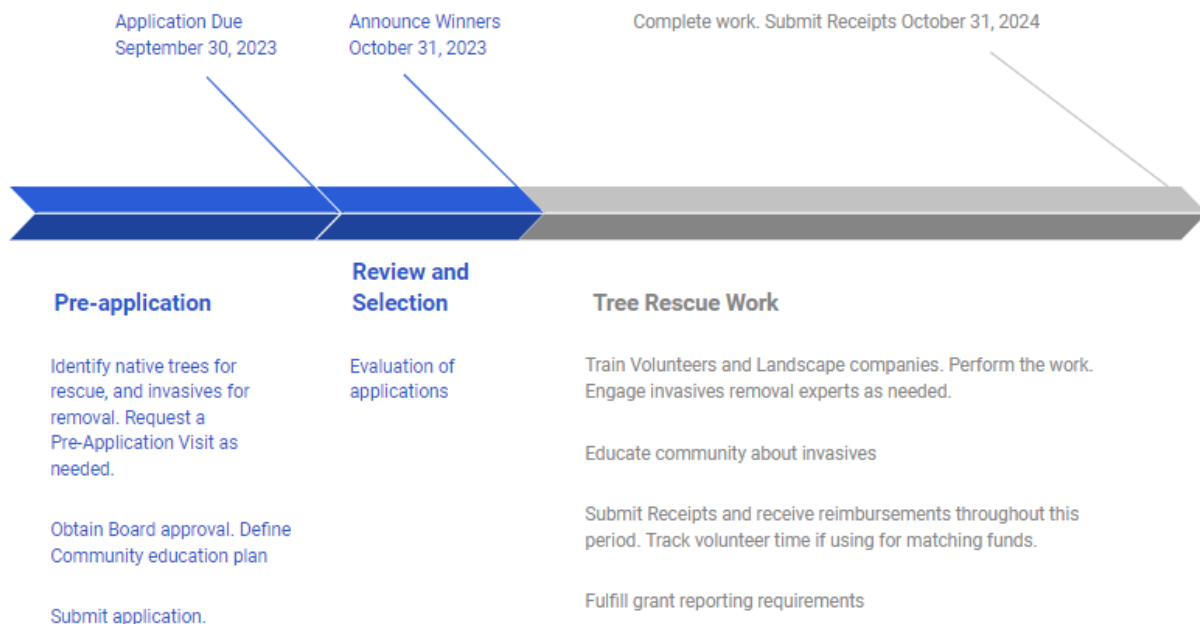
See the Blue Ridge PRISM fact sheets for [specifics of how to control](https://blueridgeprism.org/factsheets/) the various invasive species. In some cases, control without herbicide is ineffective. In other cases, simply cutting can make the situation worse. <https://blueridgeprism.org/factsheets/>. We would all like to believe that a year-long effort will eliminate invasives for all time but we know a multi-year plan to control invasives is needed that may include replanting with native plants where needed. This plan does not commit you to anything beyond the mini-grant, but will support your investment in good stewardship of your woodlots and other common land. Here is a [sample Invasives Control Plan](#). Whether you are awarded a grant or not, we encourage your community to pursue the [Audubon-at-Home Wildlife Sanctuary certification](#), which requires among other things that the residents spot at least ten out of a list of forty-one species of wildlife using the property.

Timeline.

The grant was announced on May 13th, 2023. Applications are to be submitted online and are due by 5PM on September 30, 2023. The time between the announcement of the grant and the due date for submission is to assist volunteers in community associations to identify the native trees and the invasive plants in their common area that must be named in the application and to usher the grant through their Boards for approval process.

We will announce the winners of the ten mini-grants on October 31, 2023. Communities will then have twelve months to complete the work, submit receipts for reimbursement, and complete the reporting requirements October 31, 2024.

Tree Planting and Preservation Fund Mini-Grant Timeline



Grant Winners

You will be contacted with an email from aah@audubonva.org no later than Ober 15, 2023. We will disburse the mini-grants on a reimbursement basis over the course of the year of performance. We will ask the organizers to take "before" and "after" photos which we will use as website material and for publicity articles afterwards.

Checklist for Grant Recipients - Please submit answers with your final application

What specific invasive plant species are targeted for control under this grant?

What invasive plant removal methods are planned for each targeted species?

What are your plans for after-treatment actions to discourage return of invasive plants (such as follow-up treatments, planting, mulching, etc)? See our [example of a long term plan](#).

What are your plans for educational outreach to the community about tree rescues and invasive plants?

Please submit a statement of safety concerns and plans including volunteer exposure to tickets, thorns, injuries from tools, and other physical injuries. The use of herbicides will be restricted to Certified Pesticide Applicators.

I understand that at the time of the reimbursement request, we will need to

<input type="checkbox"/>	Confirm that we contacted VA811.com before any digging or vine/tree removal to identify underground or utilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit with your reimbursement request a statement of liability coverage from the company hired to remove invasives and from your community to cover injuries by volunteers doing invasive removal (if volunteers are involved).
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit the invoice for any contractors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Itemize hours contributed by volunteers and paid staff (not including contractors). Your match can include these hours, paid at \$29.95 for volunteers or at the actual hourly rate of any paid staff.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Itemize materials (bought by your community) and costs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Submit before, during and after digital photos of the project area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Summarize your educational outreach to community members about tree rescues, including how many Tree Rescuer door hangers (which can double as brochures and which we will provide) you distributed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Summarize any social and/or environmental benefits that have resulted from the project such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Subsequent projects/activities inspired by the projectb. Evidence of increased wildlife use of the treated area or native plant regenerationc. Name of any project sites subsequently certified as an Audubon-at-Home Wildlife Sanctuary