

## INVASIVES

Invasive plants abound in this prairie restoration and efforts are constantly underway to control their growth and spread. If it was easy, they would not be invasive plants. The main problem plant in this attempted prairie restoration is Callery Pear. This tree is one of the first to bloom in the Spring, covering its entire frame with beautiful white blooms. They are very showy and were prized imports for nurseries to sell to gardeners and landscapers. Small, hardy, and beautiful, they were ideal for an interesting, easy to grow tree, to be planted in a yard. Being from China, the climate was nearly ideal in the eastern U.S. for them to flourish. The original importers knew there might be a problem, so they worked hard to establish a variety to sell that was sterile. That went well for a while.

There was increasing demand for hardier, showier, and quicker growing trees and it was not long before 6 sterile varieties had been developed for sale that had some of the desired plant characteristics. Being careful to check that each new variety was sterile and would not produce viable seeds, the plant breeders forgot to check whether the varieties were sterile when exposed to each other. Callery Pear variety number one could breed with variety number four, and before anyone realized what was going on, the new crossbred variety had spread all over the place, fueled by very fertile seeds and hungry robins that carried the seeds to new areas after snacking on the berries. Years after its escape into the wild, it is only recently that laws are going into effect to stop the sale of this aggressive, damaging species that crowds out other species of plants. It is hard to control since it is a tree that can act as a bush. Cut down the trunk and it sprouts as a bush. Ultimately, only chemical treatment can kill the plant.

**For more information, visit [www.oxbowinc.org](http://www.oxbowinc.org) or call 812-290-2941.**

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