



WHO/WHAT IS THE G&LC?

The IOB has a new Grounds and Landscape Committee (G&LC) made up of volunteers from our IOB community. Our goal is to maintain the beauty of HOA community property and look out for problems that could create hazards for residents, such as dead or sickly trees, uneven sidewalks and erosion... to name a few. It is also our mission to preserve our native habitat and prevent the establishment of non-native, invasive species such as the Chinese Tallow tree, as well as aggressive vines that can choke out trees. Non-native species like the Tallow can thrive here because there are no insects or predators adapted to feed on them. In time they can take over our native plants and we would lose the natural beauty that inspired most of us to move here in the first place!

We also hope to help homeowners with landscaping concerns such as best trees to choose that will thrive and serve to shade your home and plants that survive in the face of heat, deer and salt, plus how to best plan marsh buffer plantings. The committee meets monthly and makes suggestions for projects and improvements to the IOB HOA Board. Committee activities are reported in the IOB HOA Board minutes, which are available on the IOB website (<http://www.islandsofbeaufort.com/homeowners/>).

The G&LC is definitely not a private yard planting focused review board – we will not interfere with your personal landscape.

PROJECTS COMPLETED OR UNDERWAY

- Pruning of unwanted and invasive vines on HOA property.
- Bush hogging undeveloped lots.
- Identifying and removing dead, hazardous trees.
- Investigating the recent sudden death of multiple pine trees on Cotton Island. Laura Lee Rose from the Clemson extension office toured the area and consulted with tree experts at Clemson. The main cause of death is thought to be due to fresh and salt water intrusion (soggy roots) and not due to insects, fungus or other transmissible plant disease.
- Controlling spread of the invasive Chinese Tallow Tree. The trees appear throughout IOB. Most of the known trees on HOA property have been marked with pink/black polka dot ribbon. Larger trees were removed and herbicidally treated in mid-Feb by Southern Tree Services. Removing smaller trees and

any resprouting is an ongoing effort. More information about the Chinese Tallow Tree appears on the back.

- Limbs blocking streetlights are being removed.

PLANNED FUTURE PROJECTS

- This spring, the oleanders along the fence at the main entrance will be pruned significantly as part of a 3-year renewal scheme. This will be coordinated with painting the fence. Some small modifications to the existing plantings are being considered.
- Leveling and dust reduction around sidewalks and street easements by adding mulch, wood chips, or stones to avoid steep drop offs and to protect French drains.
- Educational material for homeowners regarding deer resistant plants, salt tolerant plants, backyard marsh buffer suggestions, and other topics as they arise will be added to the IOB website.



What is Chinese Tallow and Why Is it Damaging?

Chinese tallow is an ornamental tree with colorful autumn foliage that can survive full sunlight and shade, flooding, drought and, in some cases, fire. To horticulturalists, this kind of tree sounds like a dream, but to ecologists, land managers and land owners, this kind of tree can be a nightmare, especially when it invades an area and takes over native vegetation. Chinese tallow (*Triadica sebifera*), a non-native tree from China, is currently transforming the southeastern Coastal Plain. According to the U.S. Forest Service: Even one tallow tree presents a danger of explosive expansion that can hurt local ecosystems. Tallow trees begin producing viable seed after only 3 years. They can spread by

root fragments and cuttings, so are quick to invade after a hurricane. Tallow trees grow faster than nearly all indigenous species and quickly create a shade canopy that inhibits growth of native vegetation. Just one tallow tree can produce 100,000 seeds every year (3X more than indigenous species). Nearly all of these seeds are viable and can germinate even after several years.

When Chinese tallow invades, it eventually monopolizes an area, creating a forest without native animal or plant species. This tree exhibits classic traits of non-native invaders: it is attractive so people want to distribute it; it has incredible resiliency; it grows quickly and in a variety of soils; and it is resistant to pests. When it completely replaces native vegetation it has a negative effect on birds by degrading the habitat. Besides shading out some native species, it can also be potentially harmful to humans and animals because of its berries and plant sap that contain toxins. There is some concern its leaves may shed toxins that change the soil chemistry and make it difficult for other plants to grow.

The tallow tree is listed as a "severe threat" by the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council. The Nature Conservancy has designated Chinese tallow as one of the "ten worst alien plant invaders" in the United States. It is considered a damaging species by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, the U.S. Geological Survey of the Dept. of Interior and the South Carolina Department of Health, Environment and Conservation.

How to Recognize Chinese Tallow

Chinese tallow is a deciduous tree with a milky sap that commonly grows to 30 ft tall. Leaves are simple, alternate, 1–2.5 inches wide, with broadly rounded bases and tapering to a slender point. Leaf stalks are 1–2 inches long. Small yellow flowers that are borne on spikes to 8 inches long occur in spring. The fruit is a 0.5 inch wide, 3-lobed capsule that turns brown at maturity to reveal 3 dull white seeds. The seeds, which often remain attached to the tree through the winter, resemble popcorn, suggesting the other common name of popcorn tree.

Once Chinese tallow is established, it is very hard to get rid of. Trees are chopped down, roots are dug up and removed and herbicides are used, but the aggressive seedlings continue to return, sometimes for years. Tallow can resprout if top-killed as well as root at some distance from the original stem. Controlling Chinese tallow is a long-term effort.



Stumps of felled Chinese tallow trees that are not treated with a herbicide will rapidly sprout to form multiple-trunked trees.

Organizations and area neighborhoods that have Chinese Tallow control projects underway include Callawassie Island, Spring Island, Dataw Island, and the City of Beaufort (Crystal Lake Park).



In spring, Chinese tallow tree displays spikes of small yellow flowers that are up to 8 inches long.