

# 2025 ID TIPS and TRICKS

## Trail Ecology Survey Program: 10 Key Bits of Advice & Pitfalls to Avoid



INVASIVE SPECIES  
MANAGEMENT  
LOWER HUDSON

### 1. Posting Reminder for Invasive Plants

Please post photos and records to **iMapInvasives** for all **invasive plant species** on this year's list. Post one photo/record per rectangle for each species found. You do NOT need to post photos of every single plant found, but one photo per species per rectangle is super important! Something that easily distinguishes the species like its leaf shape or characteristic fruit/flower is best for the photo record but in a worse case scenario, post the bark at least.



## iMapInvasives

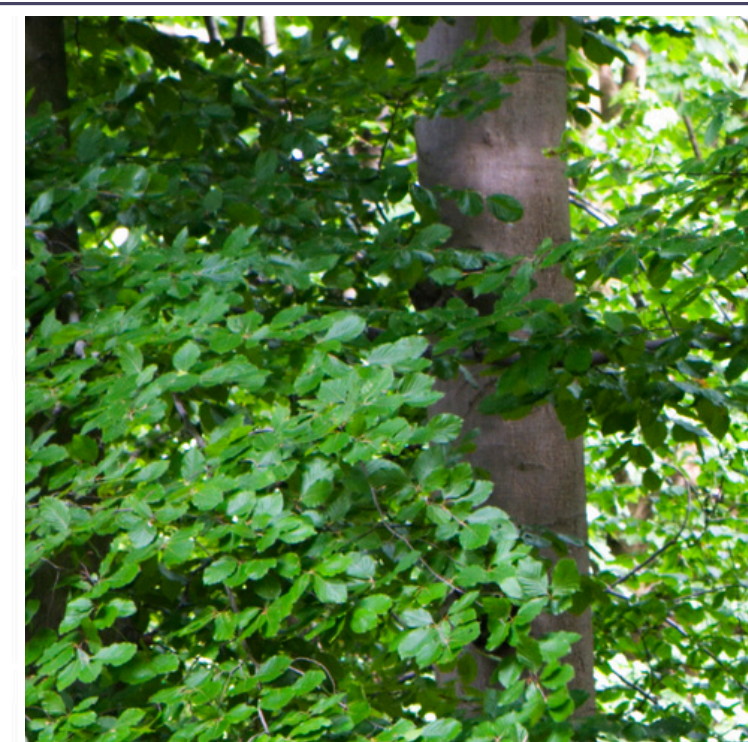
Sharing information for strategic management

### 2. Posting Reminder for Forest Pests and Lingered Trees

- If there are no beech or ash trees found in a rectangle, then do NOT post BLD and EAB as not detected, respectively... Post forest pests as "not detected" only if their native host tree (beech or ash) exists in a rectangle and it shows no signs at all of disease
- For all lingering trees found, please snap a photo and post to iNaturalist (NOT iMapInvasives). In the notes section of iNaturalist, and on your field data sheet, note you've found a lingering tree candidate!



## iNaturalist



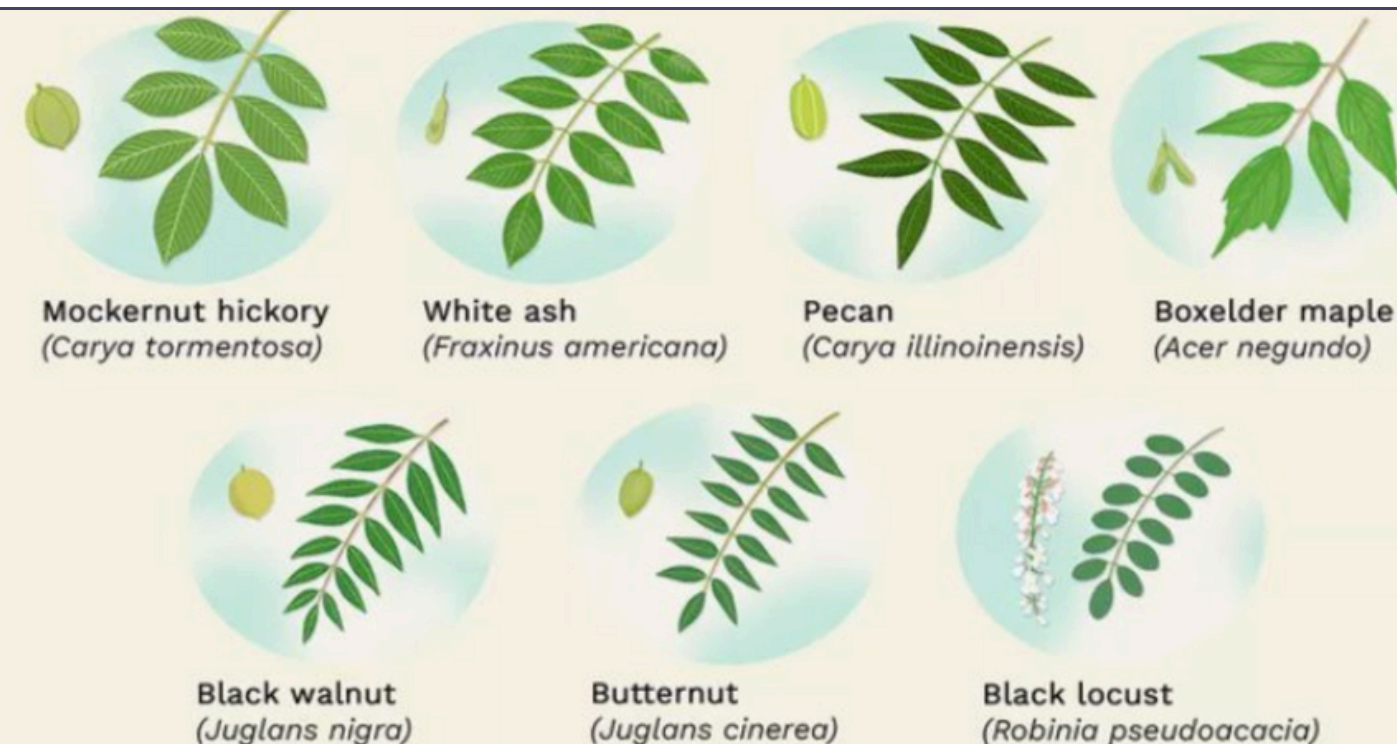
### 3. Maple Leaf Viburnum vs Maples

As the common name might suggest, there can be some ID confusion when it comes to telling our maple leaf viburnum from our maple leaves. The best indicator to tell these two plants apart is to look for the cluster of flowers that is typical of viburnums. Both red maples (far right) and maple leaf viburnum have opposite leaf arrangements but the maple leaf viburnum (near right) has a characteristic cluster of flowers (and later fruits) at the nexus of the oppositely arranged leaves.



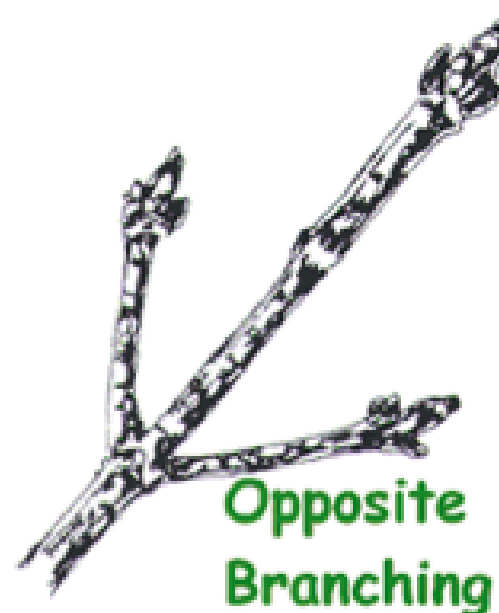
### 4. Ash versus Hickory ID

We've seen some confusion in IDs with distinguishing ash from different types of hickories. We have found that hickory and ash in particular are difficult because both have a single, unpaired terminal leaf (a leaf on the end of the branch) and can have similar looking bark (depending on the type of hickory). Especially difficult to tell apart from ash is the pignut hickory. To us, hickory leaves look a little "chunkier" and more robust whereas ash leaves are generally a little more slender. Look for fruits (hickory nuts) versus the slender winged seeds of ash too for context clues! And don't be afraid to use the Seek app for help! Also see branching differences in #5.



### 5. Ash versus Walnut ID

We've also seen some confusion in IDs with distinguishing ash and walnuts. Look for fruits and walnuts and remember that even a healthy/lingering ash will likely still have signs of the ash borer (some winding galleries and some D-shaped holes). The lingering ash trees are important not because they don't show any signs of ash borer- it's that they've been hit by the ash borer, but are fighting it off! Also remember that ash trees have opposite branching. While walnuts and hickories have compound leaves with leaflets that come out opposite, the BRANCHES and whole compound leaves come out opposite along primary branches on ash but alternate on the others.



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### 6. Beech versus Hornbeam & Birch Leaf ID

We've seen a number of cases in which beech trees have been confused with birch and hornbeam. One way to tell right away is the leaves: Birch (far right) and hornbeam (middle right) typically have more frequent, sharper triangular serrations on the edge of leaf whereas beech (near right) have more spaced wave-like edges. Use the Seek app to help! You can also check out those differences side by side starting in minute 3:53 of this video (note this video is older but it does contain this beech/birch comparison):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzsO4rmwBeM>



### 7. Beech versus Hornbeam & Birch Bark ID

We've seen a number of examples where hornbeam bark as well as birch bark has led to beech misidentification. To clarify some identifiers, birch trees typically have horizontal lines on the trunks called lenticels (far right) while hornbeam bark is more muscular in appearance (middle right) and beech bark is smoother and less sinewy (near right). Here's a helpful article if you can't find any leaves in front of you and all you have to go on is bark:

<https://nature-mentor.com/winter-birch-oak-beech-maple/>



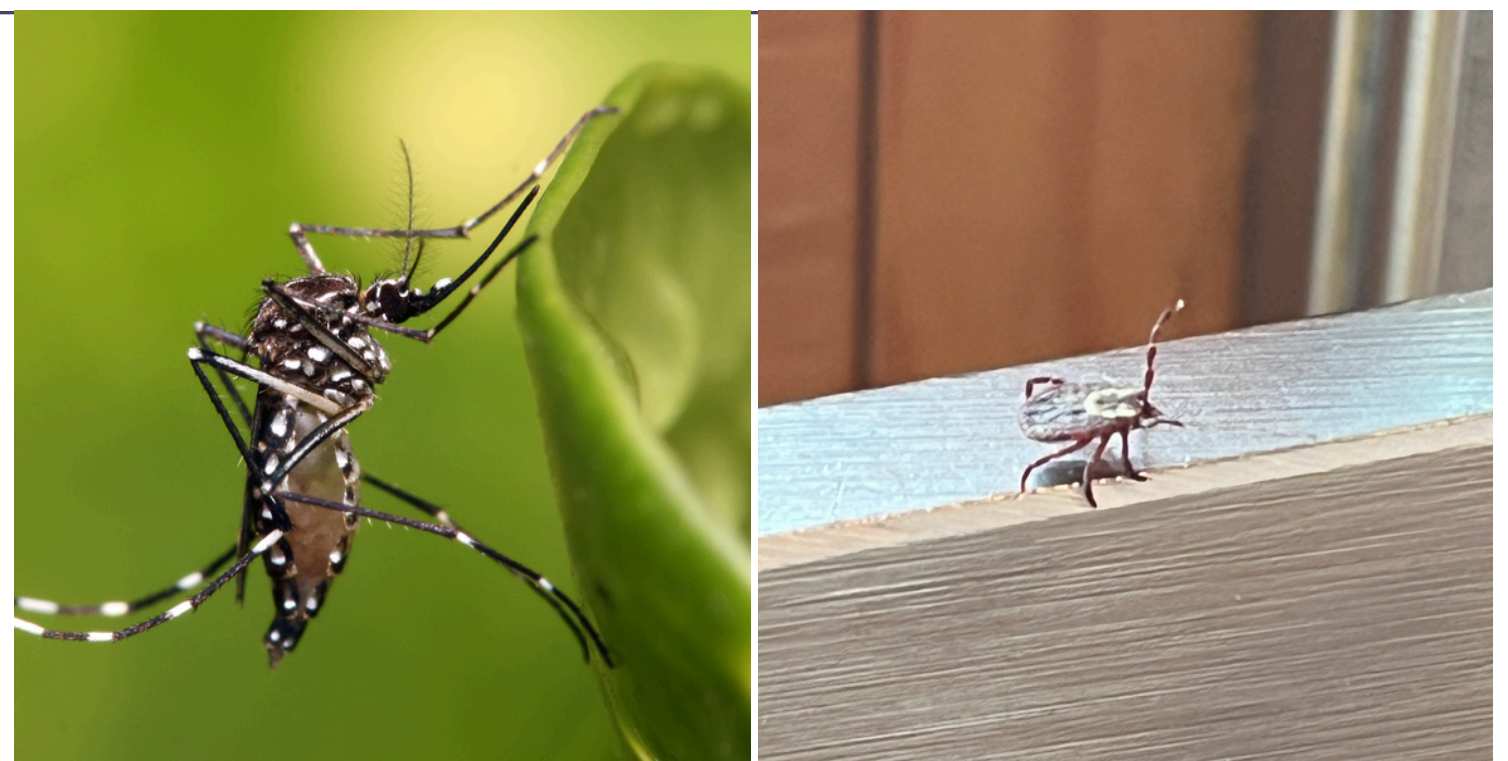
### 8. Tools for Observations

The hardest part of the IDs comes when leaves aren't right in front of you and all you have to go on is the canopy. We recommend bringing binoculars out to help see things like striping on beech leaves high up or the type of branching on trees. Also, look for forest understory saplings that might be growing up near the tall tree! That way you can see the leaves of the "baby plants" which will help with ID. Also look for fallen nuts and fruit or seeds- another great way to look for clues to help ID tall trees they likely came from!



### 9. Environmental Hazards

The biggest challenge out there might not have anything to do with IDs! Mosquitoes and heat can be tough on certain days so try and hit the trail on a day when it's not too muggy. Wear breathable long sleeves and pants whenever possible and pack bug spray and plenty of water!



### 10. Don't Touch Poison Ivy!

Avoid poison ivy. Guess what also has a terminal leaf poking out the end similar to ash and other look-alikes?- Poison ivy! Look for a hairy rope on the tree. If present, don't touch it thinking it might be an ash, etc.! See the photos here for poison ivy ID as both a groundcover and mature vine!

