



NJ Invasive Species  
Strike Team

**FoHVOS**  
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

## Strike Team Report October 2020

### *The Strike Team Needs Your Support!*

Although we have had a successful year with multiple contracts and grants allowing us to knock out many hundreds of invasive species, there are critical functions of the Strike Team that require private donations. These functions include maintaining and improving web resources that serve the conservation community and the general public. In addition to updating our phone app by adding species fact sheets and reviewing data submissions to be added to the statewide database. Unfortunately, we had to cancel on our largest annual fundraising event which largely supports these functions. Private donations also support core activities such as our investigations of new and ongoing threats posed by newly emerging invasive species.

We hope that you will consider a donation to the Strike Team to support our critical work.

Mike Van Clef, Ph.D.  
FoHVOS Stewardship Director  
Strike Team Program Director

2020 has been a crazy year that has made the importance of our work even more visible. As people get outside to improve their health and enjoy a break from staying home, they can appreciate the special places that we at FoHVOS and Strike team aim to protect.

Everyone must do more to improve the health of our lands and reverse the decline in populations of insects and birds. Restoring biodiversity is key. As you know, offending plants are known as "invasives" because they crowd out the space that more desirable wildflowers, shrubs and grasses can provide as healthy habitat.

As 2020 retreats to the rear view mirror, please consider making a gift and support our life sustaining work in the future.

Lisa Wolff  
FoHVOS Executive Director

## Live and Learn

With the help of our exceptional Technical Advisory Committee, we completed our annual species review and prepared our [2020 species list](#) as well as our updated [Do Not Plant List](#). In addition, please consider signing our [Landscape Planting Pledge](#).

### Were you hoping to learn about another new invasive shrub?

I am hoping that your answer is yes...

Sapphire-berry (*Symplocos paniculata*) is a medium to large shrub that has begun to pop up throughout the state. It ranges from 10-20 feet tall, leaves are 1.5 – 3.5 inches long and 0.75 – 1.75 inches wide with toothed margins. This plant can be confused with Oriental Photinia as leaf shape can be similar on many individual plants. Sapphire-berry, as the name implies, has very blue fruit (Photinia fruit is bright red) but plants in deeper shade do not appear to make much fruit that would help with identification.

The ‘story’ of our recognition of this species is typical for the Strike Team. We were warned about this plant from our colleagues in New York (thanks Linda Rohleder!). While in the field at South Mountain Reservation we encountered a strange, unidentified shrub that seemed non-descript and remained a mystery to us for a couple of years until Gemma Milly found it in other locations and keyed it to Sapphire-berry. Once known to us, we began to see it in other locations in central and northern New Jersey including Watchung Reservation and multiple locations in Princeton. Knowing the concerns from New York and our recent observations, we wanted to put out the word! Please let us know if you are seeing this new threat!

Note: If you see the pictures below and say ‘wow, that’s really beautiful’, then we agree. If you just have to have that color in your garden, consider purchasing American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*).



**Sapphire-berry Fruit**



**Sapphire-berry Growth Form**



**Sapphire-berry Flowers**

# Volunteer with us!

Looking for a volunteer opportunity?  
The NJ Invasive Species Strike Team is the organization for you!  
Visit our sign up genius below to share your interests with us.  
Contact [lhovath@fohvos.org](mailto:lhovath@fohvos.org) for more information.

[I'm Interested!](#)

**The Strike Team needs your help to fight invasive species throughout New Jersey. By making a membership donation, you directly fund our efforts to keep invasive species at bay and protect our native plants and wildlife. Donate through the link below!**

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## Contributing Partners

CORA HARTSHORN



### Steering Committee

**John Cecil**

*New Jersey Audubon*

**Dr. Emile Devito**

*New Jersey Conservation Foundation*

**Keri Green**

*New Jersey Highlands Council*

**Kenneth H. Klipstein, II**

*New Jersey Water Supply Authority*

**Dr. Michael Van Clef**

*Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space*

**Lisa Wolff**

*Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space*

### Technical Advisory Committee

**Thom Almendinger**

*Duke Farms*

**Michele Bakacs**

*NJ Agricultural Experiment Station*

**Kerry Barringer**

*Flora of North America Association*

**Jeanette Bowers-Altman**

*New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife*

**Heather Corbett**

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**Chris Doyle**

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**Robert Somes**

*New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife*

**Carole Stanko**

*New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife*

**Rosa Yoo**

*New Jersey Forest Service*

### Staff

**Lisa Wolff**, Executive Director

**Dr. Michael Van Clef**, Stewardship Director

**Beth Craighead**, Land Steward

**Brian Kubin**, Land Steward

**Tyler Christensen**, Land Steward

**Leslie Kuchinski**, Operations Manager

**Logan Horvath**, Program Manager

