

*Adapted from the newsletter of the URI Master Gardener Program, January 2017*

# The Canonchet Farm Habitat Restoration is a Master Gardener Direct Education Project

*By Alan Woodmansee*

*Friends of Canonchet Farm Trustee and Master Gardener Liaison*

The Friends of Canonchet Farm (FOCF) trains a team of URI Master Gardeners and members of the community to remove invasive plants along Lake Canonchet and Little Neck Pond and the trails on Canonchet Farm. Tom Fortier, the president of FOCF and a professional arborist, often provides instruction in the identification of native and invasive plants and in the best practices for removal of invasive plants. The Friends of Canonchet Farm provides tools, gloves, water, and snacks for the volunteers.



The Canonchet Farm Habitat Restoration Project has moved from the ponds to the trails for the winter months. The trail work presents a new set of challenges in getting the tools to the remote work sites and disposing of the invasive plants but we have found ways to meet those challenges.

Loppers and pruners are used to cut the invasive shrubs and vines leaving enough of the stem for removal of the roots with the Uprooter. The shrubs and vines are then placed on a tarp and dragged to an area off the trail

where they are further chopped up. The condensed pile aids in the decomposition of the cuttings and creates a winter shelter for small animals. Then 'Uprooters' and shovels are used to remove as much of the roots as possible. In this process, we attempt to remove the berry and seed laden shrubs before we disturb the soil so that we don't accidentally 'plant' the seeds.

We are learning how to identify the native and invasive plants without their leaves. We identify and flag the native plants that we want to preserve before we start removing the invasive plants.

We had between six and eighteen volunteers for the work sessions from October through December. There was an average of three Master Gardeners at each work session and usually at least one CRMC certified Invasive Plant Manager.

The trail work sessions are tentatively scheduled for every Saturday morning from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the winter and are cancelled when the weather is prohibitive. Volunteers meet at the South County Museum parking lot, 115 Strathmore Street, Narragansett for sign-in, instruction, and tool distribution.

Please email Kathie Kelleher at [friendscanonchet@aol.com](mailto:friendscanonchet@aol.com) or call 401-783-3951 if you are interested in volunteering.

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