



Invasive Species: Beach Vitex

The Bald Head Island Conservancy, in cooperation with the Village of Bald Head Island, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, NC Cooperative Extension, and the Carolinas Beach Vitex Taskforce works to monitor and eradicate former and existing sites of the invasive species Beach Vitex (*Vitex rotundifolia*).

Beach Vitex Facts:

- Deciduous woody vine with spreading runners
- Introduced to the Southeastern U.S. from the Pacific Rim in the mid-1980's
- By the mid-1990's, plant specialists began to notice the spreading of beach vitex spreading - crowding out native dune plants
- **Beach vitex is now considered a "noxious weed" by the state of North Carolina**
- Not only a threat to native dune-building plants, it is also a threat to the federally threatened loggerhead sea turtle, endangered seabeach amaranth, and various nesting shorebirds

Management

A Village Ordinance exists to establish a program to eradicate Beach vitex, including from private property (Ord. No. 2005-014, §§ 1--5, 10-21-2005). This program consists of **monitoring** and **eradication** components.

Monitoring

The Conservancy will conduct drone surveys of the dune ecosystem, including residential areas, to locate the invasive plants in areas that were previously surveyed on foot. Drone flights will reduce impact on the dunes and be more efficient in locating plants. Drone flights are conducted according to the state and federal laws and are flown by a FAA Part 107 licensed pilot. Any areas that cannot be surveyed via drone will continue to be surveyed on foot.

Eradication

The Conservancy uses a spot application method for imazapyr herbicide applying it directly to the heartwood of individual woody runners. Since it is applied directly to the target species and is broken down by UV light, it is less toxic to the environment than other herbicides. This method seems to be keeping vitex spread at bay.

For any questions, please contact BHI Village's Public Information Officer (cfaulkner@villagebhi.org) and/or the BHI Conservancy's Senior Scientist (darrow@bhic.org).