

**Natural Area Preservation**

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## INVASIVE PLANTS

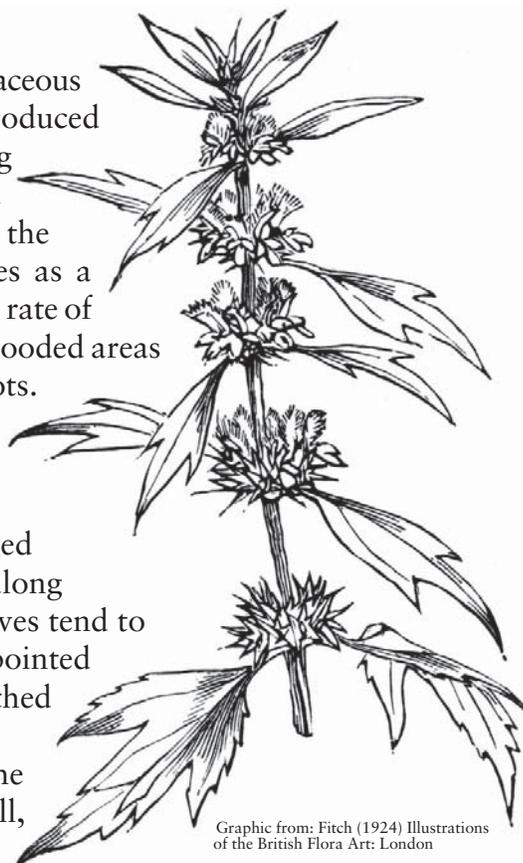
### **Common Motherwort** *Leonurus cardiaca*

#### **History**

Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*) is a perennial, herbaceous plant in the mint family (Lamiaceae). It was introduced from Europe, with original populations stemming from Asia. It was brought to North America as a medicinal herb, used particularly for ailments of the heart and nervous system. It is sold by nurseries as a commercial herb, which has no doubt accelerated its rate of spread in the midwest. Motherwort is invasive in wooded areas predominantly on the edges and in less shaded spots.

#### **How Can I Identify It?**

Motherwort is usually 2-5' tall with a heavily ridged square stem. The leaves are oppositely arranged along the stem, and though the shape is variable, the leaves tend to be palmate, or hand-shaped, with 3 or 5 sharply-pointed lobes. The edges of the leaves are also deeply toothed and the veins are conspicuous along the upper surface of the leaves. Flowers are located above the base leaves, circling the stem in a whorl. The small, tubular, pink or purple flowers are generally hairy or fuzzy. Motherwort flowers May through August. The plant can spread rapidly, both by reseeding, and by sprouting vegetatively via rhizomes, sometimes forming dense colonies.



Graphic from: Fitch (1924) Illustrations of the British Flora Art: London

# F A C T S H E E T

## COMMON MOTHERWORT *Leonurus cardiaca*

### How Can Common Motherwort Be Controlled?

- NAP's preferred method of control is hand-pulling.
- For more information on invasive plants visit The Nature Conservancy website at: <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu>



### What Can I Do?

- If you see a small infestation, pull it. When pulling be sure to remove the root to prevent resprouting from root fragments. Pulled plants should be bagged and taken to a municipal compost facility to prevent the spread of seed.
- Stay on, and keep pets on, established roads and trails to prevent invasive seed dispersal.
- After visiting an area that has common motherwort, or other invasive weeds present, clean up before you leave the site! Make sure your clothes, shoes, vehicles, and pets are mud and/or seed free.
- Use plants native to southeastern Michigan in upcoming landscaping projects. NAP has a series of brochures to assist you in choosing native plants for your garden.
- Participate in NAP-sponsored volunteer workdays to remove common motherwort and other invasives from city natural areas.
- Learn to identify common motherwort and other invasive weeds. Invasive herbaceous plants NAP would appreciate help with are:

garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)  
bittercress (*Cardamine impatiens*)  
knapweed (*Centaurea spp.*)  
Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)  
lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*)

dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*)  
golden archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*)  
common motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*)  
purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)  
Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)