



## Weed of the Month for September 2017

### Beefsteak Plant (*Perilla frutescens*)

**Origin:** SE Asia

**Interesting Fact:** Beefsteak Plant is a traditional culinary plant in Asian cuisine that unfortunately will readily escape cultivation in our area.

**Description:** Beefsteak Plant is an annual herbaceous flowering plant in the Mint family that can grow up to 3 ft. tall. It has opposite, coarsely-toothed leaves; pink, small flowers; and reddish/purple square stems.

**Defining characteristics:**

- Coarsely toothed, opposite leaves with reddish undersides
- Reddish/purple, square stems with small hairs
- Spikes of pink, small flowers in late summer
- Flowers develop into structures that hold lots of tiny seeds



(Left image) The spikes of small pink flowers

(Center image) Coarsely toothed leaves with a reddish/purple undersides

(Right image) Close up of hairy reddish/purple stems



**Habitat:** Found along wood edges, old fields, ditches, riparian areas, and roadsides.

A large, dense patch of Beefsteak Plant at Fox Ridge Nature Park.



**Ecological threat:** Beefsteak Plant can form very dense stands and outcompete native species. It is a very prolific seed producer. In addition, it is toxic to grazers and is presumed to be allelopathic.

**Control Methods:**

- Manual: Small individuals can be hand pulled. This is most effective for small, young patches in mid to late summer.
- Chemical: Herbicide applications are the most effective method for large infestations. Glyphosate can be application in mid-late summer at a foliar concentration.\* If chemically treating, make sure to spray before the seeds start developing!

\*Always follow herbicide label instructions.

**References**

Kaufman, Sylvan R. and Wallace Kaufman. Invasive Plants. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2012. Print. 518pp.

Swearingen, J., B. Slattery, K. Reshetiloff, and S. Zwicker. Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, 4th ed. National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington, DC. 2010. Print. 168pp.