

Greenwich Time

Weevils unleashed in northwest Greenwich to fight fast-growing vine

Posted: 07/10/2009 09:19:03 PM EDT

About 500 tiny weevils were unleashed at Audubon Greenwich's Gimbel Sanctuary on Friday morning in a bid to reverse the damage an invasive vine has inflicted on native plant species. The weevils are being used in an experiment to fight the growth of the mile-a-minute vine. The vine is believed to have arrived in the country mixed in with a delivery of holly seeds from Japan to a now-defunct nursery outside of York, Pa., in the 1930s. It was first identified positively as being in northwest Greenwich in 2000. The weevils, brought over from China after it was discovered they were effective against the vine in laboratory experiments, are raised at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Phillip Alampi Beneficial Insect Laboratory in West Trenton, N.J. They have been used since 2004 in other areas of the country, including Delaware and New Jersey. The weevils were released first in North Haven on July 2. Thursday, they were spread at two locations in Newtown. Though destructive to the mile-a-minute vine, weevils are not harmful to other plants.

-- Frank MacEachern

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