



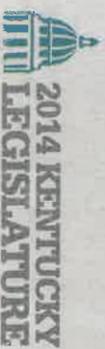
Budget deal within sight

Legislators plan to continue today

By Tom Loftus
tloftus@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Although talks between House and Senate budget conferees nearly crashed Friday as emotions

flared during an early negotiating session, the co-chairmen of the committee said they believed a final agreement could be reached at a session today. “We’re hopeful it will be tomorrow. ... We don’t anticipate that we won’t reach an agree-



ment,” said Rep. Rick Rand, D-Bedford, who co-chairs the conference committee.

Sen. Bob Leeper, a Paducah independent and the other co-chair, said, “We’re moving for-

ward. We all know we’ve got to get a budget out of here tomorrow.”

Rand and Leeper spoke after the conference meeting was adjourned about 9 p.m. Friday.

Their comments came after they huddled with top leaders of both chambers privately for more than an hour. Negotiations, which began

Wednesday, hit a low point just after noon Friday during debate over funding of cancer screenings and spouse abuse centers. “The people of the commonwealth are watching, and we’re having a debate about women in the commonwealth and whether they’re going to have access-

See BUDGET, Page A8

LOUISVILLE'S THINNING TREE CANOPY UNDER ATTACK

Invasive vines steal nutrients, block light, strangle trees

By James Bruggers
jbruggers@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

They're green, aggressive and stealing the life from Louisville's trees.

Invasive vines are slowly killing thousands of oaks, maples, tulip poplars and ashes, along with a host of other varieties, in a city that already is wrestling with a decimated tree canopy, experts say.

ONLINE

While Louisville has a new program urging people and organizations to plant thousands of trees, it's been slower to develop ways to maintain the existing ones, including getting people to cut vines.

INSIDE

Advice on how to identify invasive vines. **Page A9**

Heuser Jr., co-chairman of the Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission, which Mayor Greg Fischer started in 2012 following news accounts of Louisville's trees falling prey to storms, invasive pests, neglect and age.

You can add vines near the top of that list of threats, Heuser said.

See VINES, Page A9



A tree is encased in vines near the entrance to Cherokee Park. Vines can weaken and kill trees in several ways. ALTON STRUPP/THE COURIER-JOURNAL.

JCPS' Wesslund won't seek re-election

4 seats will be open on board this fall

By Antoinette Konz
akonz@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

Four seats on the Jefferson County Board of Education will be up for grabs this fall — including one being vacated by board member Debbie Wesslund, who announced Friday she will not seek re-election.



Wesslund — who has served two terms on the school board and is a former board president — represents District 3, which includes a large portion of northeastern Jefferson County. “This will be my final year,” Wesslund told The Courier-Journal on Friday, adding that she believes it is time for someone else to represent her district. “To say it has been an honor to serve this community is an understatement. For almost eight years, I have loved working alongside so many people who give so much to affect the lives of our children.”

Three other seats on the board are up for re-election: In District 1, which in-

cluded working alongside so many people who give so much to affect the lives of our children.

DEBBIE WESSLUND

See JCPS, Page A9

Should that vine on your tree be removed?

Not all are harmful; threats can be addressed

By James Bruggers
jbruggers@courier-journal.com
The Courier-Journal

Not all vines are tree killers.

Yew Dell Gardens' executive director Paul Cappiello identified some of the best and the worst and offered advice on how to stop the bad ones from hurting trees.

The bad ones



» **Euonymus fortunei (winter creeper):** Somewhere between a vine, shrub and groundcover, it will climb trees

and smother or shade out its host. It has evergreen leaves and fairly orange or red fruits. Birds eat the fruit and spread the plant everywhere.

» **Ampelopsis brevipedunculata (porcelain vine):** It was a popular garden plant because of its blue fruit in late summer and fall. But the fruit contains seeds that germinate readily, allowing the plant to take over woods and fields.



» **Hedera helix (English ivy):** Rarely a problem when maintained as

ground cover, but when it climbs, it begins flowering and fruiting—and spreading. At best, a high-maintenance plant. At worst, it is wildly invasive.

» **Lonicera japonica (Japanese honeysuckle):** This is not the invasive shrub honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) but is just as damaging, despite its sweetly fragrant white/yellow summer flowers. It is a twinning vine that can strangle trees and shrubs.

» **Toxicodendron radicans (poison ivy) and parthenocissus quinquefolia (Virginia creeper):** Both are native vines that mix poorly with trees. They are extremely vigorous and can easily overtop trees and shade out their hosts.

The good ones

» **Bignonia capreaolata (crossvine):** Good for small gardens with its

TACKLING VINE-COVERED TREES

- » Cut the main vine trunk at the base, and remove a section—at least 2 to 3 inches.
- » Apply glyphosate to the cut vine.
- » Don't rip the vine from the tree, which can damage the bark. Allow the vine to die and gradually drop its leaves.
- » If the vine has overtopped the tree, you may need to hire an arborist to cut out the upper portions of the vine to allow in light.

» If the tree is in the public right of way in the city of Louisville, call MetroCall 311 and ask for a permit to cut the vines.

» You can also report trees in the public right of way that are threatened by vines to MetroCall 311. City officials will inspect them and talk to the property owner about removing them.

semi-evergreen leaves and brilliant late spring or early summer flowers that are orange to red with occasional yellow highlights. Excellent hummingbird plant.

» **Hydrangea anomala subsp. petiolaris (climbing hydrangea):** Deciduous vine with large, bright green, glossy summer leaves give way to bright yellow fall color. White lace cap flowers emerge in early summer over a long period of time.

Bark forms a coppery exfoliating character that is attractive in winter.

» **Schizophragma hydrangeoides (Japanese hydrangea vine):** Closely related to the climbing hydrangea, with similar flowers and leaves. Bark is not as showy. Very heavy bloomer in full sun with reduced flowering in shade. Will grow in heavy shade.

» **Clematis (clematis):** Scores of species and varieties that make great garden plants. These are most often limited-growth vines that aren't going to overwhelm a garden. Avoid the clematis paniculata

(sweet autumn clematis); it seeds around and can become a nuisance. Most clematis do best with lots of light in moist, fertile soils.



» **Lonicera sempervirens (trumpet honeysuckle):** Native throughout the Southeast, this is a summer-blooming, non-invasive vine. Blooms are bright red/pink with little to no fragrance. It grows and flowers best in full sun, where it will attract and feed dozens of hummingbirds.

Source: Yew Dell Gardens, Louisville Metro Public Works, Olmsted Parks Conservancy.

VINES: Threaten trees' survival

Continued from Page A1

"It's an issue," agreed Erin Thompson, Louisville's new urban forester, whose hiring was a commission priority. "This is something I plan on educating people about, keeping vines off trees."

Robert Rollins, owner of Greenhaven Tree Care in Louisville, described vines as tree "parasites" whose root systems "challenge the trees for moisture and nutrients."

Still, some customers like them, he said—they say the vines "look state-ly."

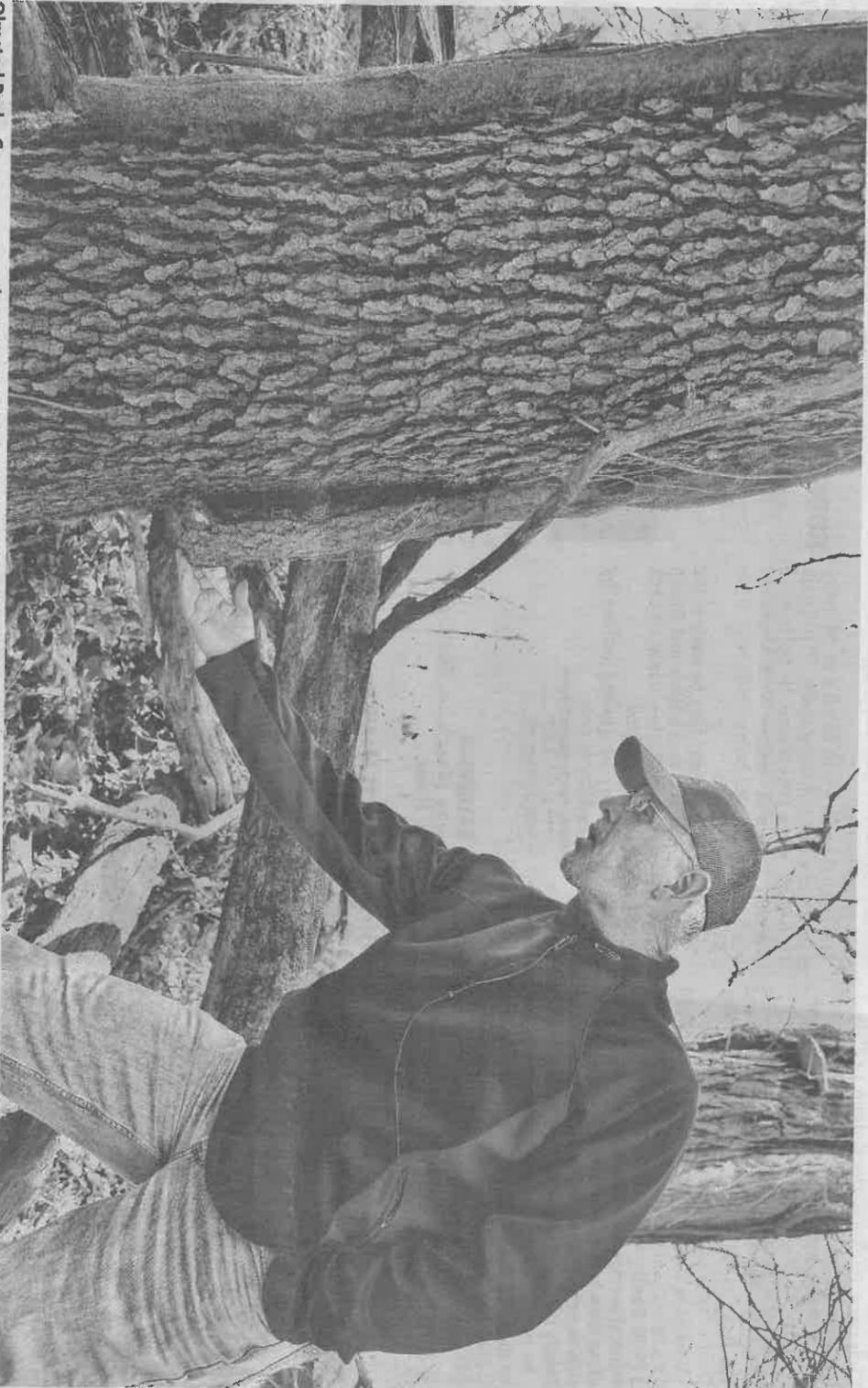
In fact, there are good vines and bad vines, said Paul Cappiello, Yew Dell Botanical Gardens' executive director. The good ones grow slowly and stay where they are supposed to, he said. The bad ones are invasive and can weaken and kill trees in several ways.

For example, an Asian wisteria plant "wraps around your tree," he said. "It's like a boa constrictor."

Some other vines, such as Virginia creeper or creeping euonymus, cling to a tree, Cappiello said. "They climb to the top of a tree and they can shade it out," preventing photosynthesis.

"They also make the tree more likely to be blown over by the wind," he said.

It's not uncommon to see vines growing 50 to 60 feet up into a tree, smoothing all but the top of its branches, he said. As thick as 3 or 4 inches in diameter, with evergreen foliage, some can be especially visible now, or in winter, before a deciduous tree's own leaves re-



Olmsted Parks Conservancy project manager Major Waltman examines a tree in Seneca Park earlier this month. The conservancy does a lot of its invasive plant removal, including cutting vines, with volunteers. PHOTOS BY ALTON STRUPP/THE COURIER-JOURNAL

Vines are a big problem in Louisville alleys, where a variety of invasive plants can be found, said Mark White, Louisville's arborist, who oversees all trees in public right-of-ways.

He said property owners are responsible for maintaining those trees, though they would need to get a city permit to cut vines, just as they would to trim branches or remove a dying tree.

Vines are also a constant source of trouble in the city's parks, where there have been efforts the past two or three years to kill them, officials said.

In one wooded area near homes in Seneca



A mature euonymus vine was cut in Seneca Park to prevent further damage to a tree.

Park vines have crept out from people's backyards to take over.

"Lots of these trees are dead," said Major Waltman, project director with the Olmsted Parks

An Asian wisteria plant "wraps around your tree. It's like a boa constrictor."

PAUL CAPPIELLO, executive director, Yew Dell Botanical Gardens

trees by cutting the vines, some of which were 2 to 3 inches thick and had climbed 40 to 50 feet high.

The conservancy does a lot of its invasive plant removal with volunteers, including holding "tree triage" events in the summer.

"It's instant gratification," Waltman said of the vine cutting.

Yet, vigilance is required. The grove in Seneca Park shows how pre-

carious a vine-cutting fix can be, as a thick blanket of creeping euonymus still covers the ground. And new vine shoots are already inching back up some of those previously saved trees.

"What we really need to do is kill all of this (euonymus), and we will," he said.

Reach reporter James Bruggers at (502) 582-4645 or on Twitter @jbruggers.