Wild urban plants, more colloquially known as weeds, have long been a target for eradication campaigns by municipal governments and homeowners alike. However, with rapid climate change, increasing globalization, and pesticide saturation, highly adaptable species are forging ahead of natives resulting in novel ecologies -- groupings of species that have never before existed, organized around highly idiosyncratic site conditions and disturbance regimes. We find many of these ecologies populating the heavily altered fabric of our cities and towns.

To date, there are no known studies, surveys, or projects specific to the wild urban plant matrix of Central Ohio. This course will engage with and polemicize current theories, texts and projects focused on wild (spontaneous) urban plants throughout the United States. In addition to carrying out readings and discussions, the course will focus on identifying species through direct field investigation, research into their characteristics, and mapping using an Instagram interface. A final design project will challenge students to advance creative proposals for how wild urban plants and novel ecologies might be used and celebrated.

This course is open to OSU students in all majors. Class time will be used for discussion and short site visits. Students will be expected to conduct significant field work outside of class. Several Saturday class excursions will allow more detailed site investigations.

1.5 credit hours