

East Coast Invasive Plants and Native Alternatives

Exotic invasive plants are often spread by birds who eat their berries. If you control berry dispersal from your property, you will minimize the spread of these plants into your neighbors' yards. Make removal of invasive plants part of your general yard maintenance. The starred (*) listings highlight invasive plants that Save Our Trees regularly removes from woodlands and residential properties. The larvae of Maryland's native pollinators have specialized to feed on native plants; generally, they cannot consume non-native foliage. Birds depend upon these insect larvae for reproduction and growth. Invasive plants are opportunistic and can overwhelm an area when conditions are suitable. For more info, go to www.saveourtreesaltogether.org.

Invasive evergreen vines

- ***English ivy** (*Hedera helix*) – Kills our canopy trees as it adds weight, compromises the bark and makes trees more susceptible to blowover. Ivy is unsuitable for control erosion and harbors mosquitoes, ticks and plant pathogens.
- ***Winter creeper** (*Euonymus fortunei*) – An aggressive groundcover that pulls nutrients from the soil and outcompetes native groundcovers.

Invasive deciduous vines

- ***Oriental bittersweet** (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) – A flowering vine that strangles trees with thick spiraling stems. It sports prolific red/orange berries and is quite common in our forests.
- ***Japanese honeysuckle** (*Lonicera japonica*) – Less robust than bittersweet, this vine is also a prolific, twining vine with yellow fragrant flowers.
- ***Asian wisterias** (*Wisteria sinensis* and *W. floribunda*) – Have very showy and large purple blooms.
- ***Wineberry** (*Ubua phoenicolasius*) – Spreads rapidly and has small spines on burgundy-colored stems.
- ***Sweet autumn clematis** (*Clematis terniflora*) – Blankets other plants and produces a lot of seeds distributed by wind.
- ***Porcelainberry** (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) – Berries are white/light blue/lavender. Can grow 10'–15' each year and heavily blankets other plants.

Native deciduous/flowering vine alternatives

- Trumpet honeysuckle** (*Lonicera sempervirens*) – Sports showy flowers loved by hummingbirds
- Cross-vine** (*Bignonia capreolata*) – Climbing vine with yellow, orange or red trumpet-shaped flowers
- American wisteria** (*Wisteria fruticosa*) – Large, drooping clusters of purple flowers that are a good substitute for non-native wisterias blooms.
- Woodbine** (*Clematis virginiana*) – Sweet-smelling vine with delicate white flowers that bloom in autumn.
- Trumpet-creeper** – (*Campsis radicans*), Dense, vigorous vine with orange flowers loved by hummingbirds.
- American bittersweet** (*Celastrus scandens*) – Deciduous woody vine with bright red berries.
- Virginia creeper** (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) – A common five-leaved vine with beautiful autumn color.
- Passionflower** (*Passiflora incarnata*) – A fast-growing perennial vine with gorgeous, showy flowers.

Invasive evergreen shrubs

- ***Asian privets** (*Ligustrum sinensis*, *L. vulgare*, *L. obtusifolium*, *L. ovalifolium*, *L. lucidum*, *L. amurense*, *L. japonicum*) – Highly invasive, fast-growing shrubs that can dominate the understory in forests and form thickets that keep native plants from growing.
- ***Heavenly bamboo** (*Nandina domestica*) – A commonly planted shrub, it produces clusters of red berries that have high levels of cyanide and can kill cedar waxwing birds.
- ***Leatherleaf mahonia** (*Mahonia bealei*) – Large evergreen shrub that produces clusters of fruit that birds spread to other properties.

Native evergreen shrubs

Inkberry (*Ilex glabra*) – A type of holly without spiny leaves that has inconspicuous flowers and black berries.

American holly (*Ilex opaca*) – A small to medium tree with evergreen spiny leaves and red berries that birds eat.

Southern bayberry (*Morella cerifera*) and Northern bayberry (*Morella pensylvanica*) – Evergreen to semi-evergreen shrubs with fragrant leaves and small berries.

Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) – Common shrub or tree often used in hedges with many cultivars of varying heights and characteristics.

Florida anise (*Illicium floridanum*) – Underused plant that thrives in dry shade areas. Requires acidic soils and has striking flowers.

Invasive deciduous shrubs

***Barberry** (*Berberis* species) – Common residential shrub with purplish leaves and thorns. Can harbor mice that often carry Lyme disease.

***Butterfly bush** (*Buddleia davidii*) – Spreads aggressively outcompeting native plants. Doesn't support various life stages of native butterflies.

Eurasian honeysuckle shrubs (*Lonicera* species) – Highly invasive shrubs/vines that spread via runners and birds.

***Burning bush** (*Euonymus alatus*) – Highly invasive shrub that grows in a variety of conditions and forms dense thickets.

***Autumn olive** (*Eleagnus umbellata*) – Forms thickets, changes soil chemistry, crowds out native plants and spreads rapidly.

***Rose of Sharon** (*Hibiscus syriacus*) – Prolific seed producer that develops deep tap roots making it difficult to remove.

Asian beautyberry (*Callicarpa dichroma*) – Looks very similar to the native beautyberry but has purple berries on short stems rather than growing directly on the branches. Birds spread the berries.

Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) – Fast-growing tree that thrives in poor soils, but is messy, has weak branches and is susceptible to insect damage.

Native deciduous shrubs – Native shrubs are especially suited to replacing lawn space.

Chokeberries (*Aronia melanocarpa*) (has black berries) and *A. arbutifolia* (has red berries) Members of the rose family, these shrubs have beautiful fall foliage and are good wildlife border plants.

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) – A deciduous holly that requires a male and female to produce bright red winter berries. Resistant to deer browse and a winter source of food for birds.

Southern highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium formosum*) – Prefers acidic soils and full sun and can handle wet soil. Edible berries.

Possumhaw viburnum (*Viburnum nudum*) – A dense, tall shrub with summer fruit and attractive fall color. Good as woodland edge.

Black-haw viburnum (*Viburnum prunifolium*) – Rounded large shrub/small tree with berries favored by wildlife and attractive dark green foliage.

Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) – Requires wet, rich soils and often grows along riverbanks and swamps Has unusual sphere-like flowers and offers excellent wildlife value.

Fothergilla (*Fothergilla* species) Thrives in acidic, well-drained, but moist, soils. Has white spring flowers and beautiful fall color.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) – Grows in dry woodlands. Has clusters of small yellow flowers early in the spring with aromatic leaves. Deer resistant.

Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*) – Suckering shrub with white or pink flowers that is good for stream banks and other places requiring erosion control.

Sweetshrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) – Shrub that does well in sun and shade with showy fragrant flowers.

New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*) – Small shrub with deep roots with white fragrant flowers that supports the larvae of several butterfly species.

Oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) Oak-shaped leaves with large showy flowers. Shrub likes moist rich soil and blooms best in full sun.

Smoothleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*) – A small, mounded shrub that prefers moist rich soil.

Pinxter azalea (*Rhododendron periclymenoides*) – Native azalea with spectacular flower colors. Varied seasons of bloom. fragrant and good fall color.

American beautyberry (*Callicarpa Americana*) – Shrub with brilliant purple berries that likes moist, well-drained soil. examine berry arrangement on stem to avoid confusion with non-native variety.

Strawberry bush (*Euonymus americanus*) – Erect shrub with red fruits and orange seeds. Prefers rich moist soil and sun-dappled light. Deer candy.

Virginia sweetspire, (*Itea virginica*) – Broad, but smallish, shrub with arching branches. Does well in full sun to full shade but prefers partial shade. Elongate white flowers in spring.

Shrubby St. John's wort (*Hypericum prolificum*) – Compact deciduous shrub with bright yellow flowers.

Red twig or red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) – Large deciduous shrub that has bright red stems on new growth and white berries that birds feed on.

Invasive ground covers

***Creeping liriop**e (*Liriop*e *spicata*, *L. muscari*) Used widely in landscaping, this plant can easily get out of control and is spread by birds and underground runners. Difficult to remove from lawn.

***English ivy** (*Hedera helix*) – Aggressive, fast-growing evergreen vine that climbs trees and ultimately leads to their demise. Berries form only when the vine has reached the upper parts of the tree.

***Periwinkle** (*Vinca minor*) – Vigorous plant that forms dense mats, crowding out native ground covers. Commonly planted in home gardens.

Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*) – Shrubby deciduous groundcover that forms a dense carpet of green and crowds out native plants.

***Winter creeper** (*Euonymus fortunei*) – Woody vine that sometimes evolves into a shrub, this evergreen plant readily escapes into forests and compromises the trees.

Native ground covers

Sedge species: Blue wood sedge (*Carex flaccosperma*), **Pennsylvania sedge** (*C. pensylvanica*), **Plantain-leaved sedge** (*C. plantaginea*) – Grass-like perennials that made good groundcovers and thrive in a range of conditions. Some varieties can substitute for lawn grasses (see Mt. Cuba *Carex* study).

Golden ragwort (*Packera aurea*) – A semi-evergreen groundcover with stalked yellow flowers that spreads nicely. Grows in sun or shade with areas that have moist or wet soil.

Lyre-leaf sage (*Salvia lyrata*) – An evergreen ground cover with purple-hued leaves in winter. Has blue flowers in spring.

Christmas fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*) – A 1–2' tall evergreen fern that prefers growing on slopes and helps with erosion. Does not spread readily.

Hairy alumroot (*Heuchera villosa*) – Semi-evergreen and low-growing with charming white flowers on stalks in summer. Many cultivated varieties. Handsome large, foliage.

Allegheny spurge (*Pachysandra procumbens*) – Great alternative to Japanese pachysandra though does not spread as quickly. Pretty, mottled leaves with fragrant blooms.

Green-and-gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) – Easily grown in shady to partial shade conditions. Plant spreads readily but is easily controlled. Has bright yellow flowers.

Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) – Evergreen, low-growing groundcover with white flowers and red berries. Best in woodland gardens with partial shade.

Moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*) – Groundcover with prolific blooms that does best in full sun and soils with good drainage

Woodland Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*) – Does best in partial to full shade in rich, but well-drained soils. Grows up to 12” and has beautiful blue/purple flowers.

Foamflower (*Tiarella cordifolia*) – Shade-loving plant with stalked white to pinkish flowers. Both spreading and clumping varieties and prefers rich soils.

Barren strawberry (*Waldsteinia fragarioides*) – An evergreen, strawberry-like plant that is quite versatile and grows in a variety of conditions.

To find this list online, go to www.saveourtreesogether.org and click on the Resources tab.