Non-native, invasive species are the #2 threat to imperiled species in the United States. You can enhance the aesthetic value of your landscape and protect Florida’s natural resources by removing the non-native invasive plants listed below and replacing them with one of their ‘AlterNatives’.
Why plant natives?

- Native plants provide food, shelter, and areas of reproduction for our native wildlife, including butterflies, birds and bees.
- Native plants provide a sense of place - they remind us of our heritage and the specific part of Florida in which we live.
- Native plants have adapted to regional climate conditions over hundreds of thousands of years. As such, they can tolerate our heat, humidity, rain (or lack thereof), and cold snaps.
- Native plants conserve water, time and energy (and can save you money as a result).
- Native plants protect our waterways and ground water by filtering chemicals out of runoff.

For more information, consult the Florida Native Plant Society at www.fnps.org and consider becoming a member. Your membership supports the preservation and restoration of wildlife habitats and biological diversity through the conservation of native plants.

Attention Landscapers and Home Gardeners:

The following “invasive exotic” plants are harmful to our state’s natural areas. Avoid using them in your landscapes. Instead, select from the Alternatives species listed in this brochure.

The “Bad Guys” (a.k.a. Invasive Exotic Plants)

- Chinese Tallow Tree: Triadica sebifera (formerly Sapium sebiferum)
- Brazilian Pepper: Schinus terebinthifolius
- Chinese Ligustrum: Ligustrum sinense
- Coral Ardisia: Ardisia crenata
- Heavenly Bamboo: Nandina domestica
- Elephant Ear, Wild Taro: Clocasia esculenta
- Lantana: Lantana camara
- Mexican Petunia: Ruellia simplex (formerly Ruellia brittoniana)
- Japanese Honeysuckle: Lonicera japonica
- Tuberous Sword Fern: Nephrolepis cordifolia
- Asparagus Fern: Asparagus aethiopicus (formerly Asparagus sprengeri)
- Wedelia: Sphagneticola trilobata

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Turn the page for Eco-Friendly Alternatives Plant Suggestions

Why Invasive Plants Are a Problem

What is an “Invasive Exotic Plant” and who gets to hand out that label?

The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC) monitors and records the spread and damage of these plants state-wide. Their mission is “to support the management of invasive exotic plants in Florida’s natural areas by providing a forum for the exchange of scientific, educational, and technical information.” Learn more at www.FLEPPC.org

By the FLEPPC definition, an Invasive Exotic plant is a “species outside of its natural range that displaces native species and disrupts ecosystem processes.” In essence, they have become ‘problem’ plants for Florida’s varied ecosystems. They are to be avoided at all costs, especially in urban landscapes and gardens where making a home for them may allow them to escape to nearby natural areas.

The worst offenders: Category I Invasive Exotics

Invasive exotic plants are termed “Category I” when they “…alter native plant communities by displacing native species, change plant community structures or ecological functions, or hybridize with natives.” This means they have become ‘problem plants’ in Florida and have required management by a variety of governmental and/ or municipal agencies to prevent them from displacing and taking over our natural areas. Our state spends an estimated $60 million annually on invasive species control programs.

Also to be avoided: Category II Invasive Exotics

FLEPPC describes Category II invasive exotic plants as those that “have increased in abundance or frequency but have not yet altered Florida plant communities to the extent shown by Category I species. These species may become ranked Category I, if ecological damage is demonstrated.” See the FLEPPC website to see the list of Category II plants.