



Invasive Plants in Our Backyards



Plants not native to the Southeastern United States are taking over our landscape. These alien invaders outcompete and gradually displace our native plants. This affects native wildlife and the overall health and stability of our environment. Kudzu, for example, has consumed an estimated seven million acres in the South, replacing thousands of native species! The impact of these invasive plants is second only to habitat destruction.

What are these plants? They are species that do not naturally occur in the Southeast but have been accidentally or purposely introduced by people. Of course, the vast majority of introduced plants pose no threat, but some grow out of control. These invasive plants spread because the natural controls that keep them in check in their native homelands, such as disease and insects, do not exist here.

The plants listed are some of the worst plants invading natural areas such as our refuges, parks and forests. Land managers of these natural areas recommend that you consider not planting these species in your yard, especially if you live near a natural area. For a more thorough list and information specific to your state, check out the sources listed on the back of this factsheet. Also, talk to your local nursery or extension office for information about alternative species you can plant in your backyard.

Trees	Shrubs	Vines	Herbaceous Plants (no woody stem)	Aquatic Plants
Tree of Heaven <i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Autumn & Russian Olive <i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i> , <i>E. angustifolia</i>	Kudzu <i>Pueraria montana</i>	Chinese silver grass <i>Miscanthus sinensis</i>	Waterlettuce <i>Pistia stratiotes</i>
Princess Tree <i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	Bush Honeysuckles <i>Lonicera morrowii</i> , <i>L. tartarica</i> , <i>L. Xbella</i> , <i>L. maackii</i> , <i>L. standishii</i>	Oriental Bittersweet <i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Japanese Grass <i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Hydrilla <i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>
Melaleuca <i>Melaleuca quiquenervia</i> (Florida only)	Common, Chinese, & Japanese Privet <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> , <i>L. sinense</i> , <i>L. japonicum</i>	Japanese & Chinese Wisteria <i>Wisteria floribunda</i> , <i>W. sinensis</i>	Musk Thistle <i>Carduus nutans</i>	Giant salvinia <i>Salvinia molesta</i>
Chinaberry <i>Melia azedarach</i>	Multiflora rose <i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Japanese honeysuckle <i>Lonicera japonica</i>	Purple loosestrife <i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Eurasian water-milfoil <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>
Chinese tallow tree <i>Sapium serbiferum</i>	Japanese spiraea <i>Spiraea japonica</i>	Climbing euonymus <i>Euonymus fortunei</i>	Taro <i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	
Earleaf Acacia <i>Acacia auriculiformis</i> (Florida only)	Heavenly bamboo <i>Nandina domestica</i>	Japanese climbing fern <i>Lygodium japonicum</i>	Cogongrass <i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	
Australian pine <i>Casuarina spp.</i> (Florida only)	Brazilian pepper <i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i> (Florida only)	Skunk vine <i>Paederia foetida</i>	Japanese knotweed <i>Fallopia cuspidatum</i>	
Bishopwood <i>Bischofia javanica</i>	Burning bush <i>Euonymus alata</i>		Crownvetch <i>Coronilla varia</i>	
Camphor tree <i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>	Coral ardisia <i>Ardisia crenata</i>		Sericea lespedeza <i>Lespedeza cuneata</i>	
Laurel fig <i>Ficus microcarpa</i>	Beach naupaka <i>Scaevola sericea</i> (Florida only)		Coltsfoot <i>Tussilago farfara</i>	
Mimosa <i>Albizia julibrissin</i>	Japanese barberry <i>Berberis thunbergii</i>		Garlic mustard <i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	
Sawtooth Oak <i>Quercus accutissima</i>	Strawberry guava <i>Psidium cattleianum</i> (Florida only)			
Schefflera <i>Schefflera actinophylla</i>	Lantana <i>Lantana aculeata</i>	Oriental Bittersweet Fruit		

