

# Avoid invasive plant species

Intuition may suggest all plants that provide habitats for wildlife and produce oxygen for the atmosphere are good no matter where they are planted. However, non-native plant species that are introduced into areas across North America can pose significant threats to an ecosystem.

Foreign plants can wreak havoc on native plant species and agricultural industries. Scores of plants are aggressively invading certain areas of the country. Invasive species are introduced largely due to human action, such as planting non-native plants. Plants also may be introduced through boating and fishing. Wind and rain may introduce non-native plants to a particular region, while some plants are introduced through animals.

The organization PlayCleanGo.org says that not all non-native plants are harmful and some can be beneficial. But non-native plants that take over and cause severe damage in areas outside of their normal range are considered to be invasive, and efforts must be made to keep invasives under control.

Gaining awareness of the pathways through which invasives spread can help

people avoid introducing invasive species. Some invasive plants are very attractive and they may be for sale at some garden centers, but such plants should be avoided for the benefit of local ecosystems. In addition, weeds and seeds can be hidden in potting mixes or lawn and garden products and essentially sneak their way into regions where they do not belong.

Homeowners who learn to recognize invasive species can decrease their risk of introducing such plants to their properties. The following are some common invasive species:

- Garlic mustard
- Norway maple
- Australian pine
- Bermuda grass
- Chinese privet
- Purple loosestrife
- Japanese honeysuckle
- Kudzu
- Paper mulberry
- Mayweed
- Yellow rocket
- Oxeye daisy
- Ground ivy
- Cotton thistle
- English ivy
- Autumn olive

People can learn more about invasive species by speaking with lawn and garden professionals.

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