AlterNatives

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 AlterNative 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: *Colocasia 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*

Turn the page for Eco-Friendly AlterNative 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.

Northeast Florida's Invasive Plants and Suggested Replacements

AlterNatives for Northeast Florida

Non-native, invasives 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'.

Non-Native (remove)

Triadica sebifera
Chinese Tallow

photo by Gil Nelson
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Carpinus caroliniana
Hornbeam

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- medium, long-lived deciduous tree w/ beautiful bark and striking fall color
- larval food plant for tiger swallowtail and red-spotted purple butterflies, good wildlife food plant

Cercis canadensis
Redbud

photo by Dennis Woodland
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- rounded, deciduous tree (30'-35') with heart shaped leaves
- rosy pink flowers in early spring before leaves emerge
- budding branches make great cut flowers
- moderate growth rate

Acer saccharum ssp. floridanum
FL Sugar Maple

photo by Michael Drummond
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- gorgeous fall color
- slow growing but attractive tree
- tolerates moist but not wet soils
- Can reach 25-50 ft. in height

Non-Native (remove)

Schinus terebinthifolius
Brazilian pepper

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Myrcianthes fragrans
Simpson's Stopper

photo by T. Ann Williams
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- reliable dense evergreen shrub
- beautiful white flowers followed by red-orange fruits
- attractive to birds for food and cover
- drought tolerant

Illicium parviflorum
Ocala Anise

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- small yellow ribbon like petaled flowers in spring
- shade tolerant, pest free
- good screen/hedge
- large, evergreen, drought-tolerant shrub with fragrant foliage

Ilex vomitoria
Yaupon Holly

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- versatile evergreen suitable for multi-stemmed specimens or clipped hedges
- no pests, attractive to birds for food and cover
- showy red berries in fall/winter

Non-Native (remove)

Ligustrum sinense
Chinese Ligustrum

© 2005 TNC

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Forestiera segregata
Florida Privet

photo by Walter K. Taylor
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- great large evergreen hedge plant that can be trained to almost any size
- small yellow fragrant flowers (no petals) in early spring
- a fine specimen plant

Myrcianthes fragrans
Simpson's Stopper

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- reliable dense evergreen shrub
- beautiful white flowers followed by red-orange fruits
- attractive to birds for food and cover
- drought tolerant

Ilex vomitoria
Yaupon Holly

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- versatile evergreen suitable for multi-stemmed specimens or clipped hedges
- no pests, attractive to birds for food and cover
- showy red berries in fall/winter

Non-Native (remove)

Ardisia crenata
Coral Ardisia

photo by Bill Johnson
© Fine Gardening

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Vaccinium darrowii
Darrow's Blueberry

photo by Ann Murray
© 1999 Univ. of FL

- dwarf evergreen to 3' tall
- fine textured gray-green leaves provide nice contrast
- prefers sandy, acidic soils (e.g. scrub, flatwoods, and sandhills)
- delicious fruit and showy spring flowers

Ilex glabra
Inkberry

photo by Mary Keim
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- grows on low pH sandy to peaty soils
- slow growing evergreen shrub
- fine textured foliage; 6' tall mature
- foliage may turn plum-colored in winter
- typical of pine flatwoods

Vaccinium myrsinites
Shiny Blueberry

photo by Allen Boatman
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- evergreen with dark, glossy leaves; grows to 3' tall
- has cultural requirements similar to those of V. darrowii
- can be propagated by tip cuttings

Non-Native (remove)

Nandina domestica
Heavenly Bamboo

photo by Gil Nelson
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Ilex glabra
Inkberry

photo by Mary Keim
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- grows on low pH soil (sand to peat)
- slow growing evergreen shrub
- fine textured foliage; 6' mature height
- foliage may turn plum-colored in winter
- typical of pine flatwoods

Lyonia ferruginea
Rusty Lyonia

photo by Shirley Denton
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- upright evergreen shrub 6' - 12' Ht
- small, drooping bell-like white flowers in spring
- new foliage with rusty brownish cast
- very drought-tolerant

Psychotria nervosa
Wild Coffee

photo by T. Ann Williams
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- evergreen, rounded shrub 4'- 8' with showy red berries in fall.
- attractive leaf texture, shade tolerant
- prefers well-drained soil
- birds and other wildlife consume its berries

Non-Native (remove)

Colocasia esculenta
Wild Taro, Elephant Ear

photo by Asit K. Ghosh
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Canna flaccida
Southern Marsh Canna

photo by Betty Wargo
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- deciduous perennial that occurs in wetlands naturally but will survive in upland sites with uniformly moist soil. will grow in shallow water
- great accent plant with bold color and tropical foliage, grows fast
- fruit eaten by wildlife

Nephrolepis biserrata
Giant Sword Fern

photo by Ann Murray
© 2001 Univ. of Florida

- this lush, evergreen fern prefers acidic soils and is typically found in hammocks and swamps
- its upright leaves can grow over 5' long
- spreads via underground rhizomes and can quickly colonize

Hibiscus coccineus
Scarlet Hibiscus

photo by Mary Keim
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- excellent 5'-7' tall perennial with striking crimson flowers in summer through early fall
- very attractive and great in damp sites

Non-Native (remove)

Lantana camara
Lantana, Shrub Verbena

photo by Ann Murray
© 1999 Univ. of FL

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Helianthus debilis
Dune Sunflower

photo by Keith Bradley;
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- drought tolerant, long-blooming semi-evergreen perennial w no pests & continuous blossoms
- highly recommended for any garden
- frost kills to ground but recovers with warmer weather

Gaillardia pulchella
Firewheel

photo by Laurie Sheldon
© Laurie Sheldon

- rounded clumps of soft leaves with brightly colored flowers throughout the summer
- grows to 2' tall and readily reseeds
- great for attracting butterflies

Phlox pilosa
Downy Phlox

photo by Kenneth Sytsma
© University of Wisconsin

- mounding perennial grows 2' tall
- pale pink to lavender flowers are fragrant with basally-fused petals forming an elongate tube for nectaring from
- stems and foliage covered with soft hairs

Non-Native (remove)

Ruellia simplex
Mexican Petunia

photo by Laurie Sheldon
© Laurie Sheldon

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Echinacea purpurea
Purple Coneflower

photo by Laurie Sheldon
© Laurie Sheldon

- hardy perennial, blooms profusely throughout extended flowering period
- attracts butterflies
- fast growth
- prefers well drained soils

Tradescantia ohiensis
Spiderwort

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- upright growth habit to about 3'
- purple-blue three-petaled flowers typically open in the morning
- beargrass-like leaves spring from up to 8 nodes around succulent stems

Stachytarpheta jamaicensis
Blue Porterweed

photo by Albert
http://commons.wikimedia.org

- grows to 4' tall and slightly wider
- deep blue flowers attract butterflies
- foliage is shiny and dark, with a nice textural quality
- readily reseeds and appreciates pruning

Non-Native (remove)

Lonicera japonica
Japanese Honeysuckle

photo by Fred Nation
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Bignonia capreolata
Cross Vine

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- excellent evergreen climbing vine
- beautiful foliage and orange/ apricot flowers late spring
- drought tolerant once established
- tolerates wide range of soils

Gelsemium sempervirens
Yellow Jessamine

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- excellent evergreen climbing vine
- beautiful foliage and fragrant yellow flowers
- fast growth, 30 ft. or more

Lonicera sempervirens
Coral Honeysuckle

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- twining, climbing vine w showy foliage, bright red flowers
- attracts hummingbirds and butterflies
- non-aggressive growth habit
- fruit and leaves can be toxic
- prefers well drained to dry soils

Non-Native (remove)

Nephrolepis cordifolia
Tuberous Sword Fern

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Nephrolepis biserrata
Giant Sword Fern

photo by Laurie Sheldon
© Laurie Sheldon

- lush, evergreen fern prefers acidic soils and is common in hammocks and swamps
- upright leaves can grow over 5' long
- spreads via underground rhizomes and can quickly colonize

Thelypteris kunthii
Southern Shield Fern

photo by Keith Bradley
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- graceful, arching fronds to 3' high
- foliage takes on a bronze cast as winter approaches
- often called "river fern" because it is frequently found along water bodies

Osmunda cinnamomea
Cinnamon Fern

photo by Shirley Denton
© Shirley Denton

- fertile fronds take on a chocolate color, which contrasts beautifully with its sterile, outward-arching fronds
- young fiddleheads are covered with a fuzzy material that is a favorite among birds for nest lining

Non-Native (remove)

Asparagus aethiopicus
Asparagus fern

photo by Joel Timyan
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Hypericum tenuifolium
Atlantic St. John's Wort

photo by Betty Wargo
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- great low evergreen ground cover for dry sunny sites
- fine short dense needle like leaves
- good in masses

Zamia pumila
Coontie

photo by Shirley Denton
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- low growing (to 3') evergreen adaptable to most conditions
- salt tolerant
- small orange fruits in summer
- good in masses or as specimen plant
- poisonous

Viburnum obovatum 'nana'
Dwarf Walter's Viburnum

photo by Allen Boatman
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- semi-evergreen profusely-flowering shrub
- showy, white, flat topped clusters of flowers in early spring
- good hedge/screen plant
- attracts birds

Non-Native (remove)

Sphagneticola trilobata
Wedelia, Creeping Oxeye

photo by Walter K. Taylor
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

AlterNatives (plant these instead)

Phyla nodiflora
Fogfruit, Capeweed

photo by Laurie Sheldon
© Laurie Sheldon

- evergreen groundcover that spreads vigorously
- attractive when planted to ramble over the edges of boulders and containers
- salt tolerant

Dyschoriste oblongifolia
Oblongleaf Twinflower

photo by Dennis Girard
© Inst. for Systematic Botany

- pale lavender flowers, usually in pairs at the tips of 8"-12" stems
- spreads slowly by underground rhizomes or self-sown seed
- grow in large groups for effect

Key to Symbols

- small tree
- shrub
- grass or fern
- flowering plant
- ground cover
- vine
- bird/butterfly friendly
- full sun
- part shade
- shade
- moist soil
- moderate water
- drought tolerant

The Wisdom of Landscaping with Native Plants

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) defines a native plant as one present in Florida prior to European contact, which means prior to 1513.

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.

You can locate and/or purchase any of the plants listed in this brochure with the search feature on either **http://www.plantant.com/** or **http://www.floridanativenurseries.org/**

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.

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.
- Aldo Leopold

This brochure was developed by the Florida Native Plant Society, Ixia Chapter, representing Clay, Duval, & Nassau Counties. Go to http://ixia.fnpschapters.org/ for meeting times, activites, and more.

graphics and layout by Laurie Sheldon