

# HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Nassau County



Horticulture Program  
Eisenhower Park  
East Meadow, NY 11554  
516 228-0426  
Fax 516 228-0426

## Invasive Plants of Long Island

Invasive plants, by crowding out native flora and their codependent insects and wildlife are a leading source of environmental destruction across ecosystems on Long Island. Invasive plants tend to form monocultures and reduce the diversity necessary for niches and food sources for many different kinds of animals and plants.

Purple loosestrife essentially “sterilizes” the areas it colonizes by being a poor source of food and shelter. Black Swallow wort, a milkweed relative, decreases the survivorship of monarch butterfly larvae, adding another burden to already troubled populations.

### What makes a plant invasive?

Abundant fruits and seeds for invasives such as honeysuckle, autumn olive, purple loosestrife and oriental bittersweet. Invasive plants have effective, varied dispersal methods with birds being number one and wind a close second. A high percentage of seed germination, a wide range of biological tolerances and rapid growth are also contributors to invasiveness.

### What to do?

Mechanical control works best when the invasion is small, e.g. hand pull prior to seed set. For larger plants like Bush honeysuckles, Japanese barberry, or Winged euonymus, cut the shrub to the ground then swipe the stump with herbicide. There are also pruners available with an attachment that allows a drip of herbicide to be delivered with each cut. Widespread herbicide treatments are difficult because these wipe out other plants as well. The spread of invasive weeds can be reduced through prevention. About half of our invasive plant species are ornamental plants that have escaped from our gardens.

**The top twenty-five invasives to our area as named by the L.I. Weed Management Agency are as follows.**

### TREES

- Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana* ‘Bradford’)
- Olives: autumn and Russian (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*, *E. umbellata*)

### SHRUBS

- Burning bush, winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*)
- Bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera*, several types)

\* There are non-invasive species, varieties, or cultivars of this genus above. Please research carefully before you plant and when in doubt, do not plant it.

- Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)\*

### VINES

- Five-leaf akebia, chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*)
- Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
- Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*)
- Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
- Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)
- Silver lace vine (*Polygonum aubertii*)

### PERENNIALS

- Chinese yam (*Dioscorea batatas*)
- Cypress spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*)
- Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*, *L. alicaria*, *L. virgatum*, or any variety, hybrid, or cultivar)
- Tall, perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*)

### ANNUALS/BIENNIALS

- Mile-a-minute vine (*Polygonum perfoliatum*)

### GRASSES

- Chinese silver grass, Eulalia (*Miscanthus sinensis*)
- Common reed (*Phragmites australis* - European subspecies)
- Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)

### AQUATIC (water gardens, ponds, and aquariums)

- Carolina, grey fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)
- Caulerpa, marine green macroalgae (*Caulerpa taxifolia*) (saltwater aquariums)
- Parrot-feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*, syn. *proserpinacoides*)
- Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*)
- Water-hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*)
- Water-lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*)

Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, parks, tourism and our richly diverse natural resources are at risk from invasive plants. You can help minimize the spread of invasive plants, by choosing non-invasive plants for your garden. There are a large variety of native plants that you can plant to help bring back natural biodiversity.

— Please refer to fact sheet D-2-32 —

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