Prolific seeder - Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) can produce 2-3 million seeds per year.

Protect your home and the community you love.

Gardening...what a satisfying pastime and a smart way to beautify your home! But do a little homework first and have a care before you buy those plants and spread those seeds. Some plants are bad for the environment, choking out native species and wreaking havoc through our wildlands.

Invasive Facts

Invasive Species - *a species that is non-native or alien to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.*

- Invasive species are the number one threat to native biodiversity on protected lands.
- Invasive plants are spreading over approximately 1,729,730 acres per year of U.S. wildlife habitat.
- Scientists estimate that invasive plants cost our economy $35 billion in damages and treatment each year!

Know Before You Grow

Find safe alternatives to invasive plants by learning about the native plants in your area.

Visit www.wildflower.org
and select "explore plants."

Plantwise

www.beplantwise.org

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower center
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Gardensmart
Plantwise

Looks can be deceiving - Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) is notorious for clogging canals and waterways.

The Plantwise program gives gardeners easy tips on how to manage their garden to preserve the unique qualities of neighboring wildlands. It is a partnership between the National Park Service, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, The Garden Club of America, National Invasive Species Council and many others to reduce invasive plants in the urban landscape.

Plantwise Guidelines

1. Know your plants. Find out which plants cause problems in parks or natural areas in your region to know which species to avoid.

2. Use non-invasive alternatives. Ask a nursery about non-invasive plant alternatives. Native plants often have similar characteristics to invasives without the damaging ecological side effects.

3. Watch out for invasive plant hitchhikers. Check clothes, belongings and vehicles for seeds and pieces of plants that attach and drop somewhere new.

4. Have a care if you share. Many invasive plants move around because they are attractive garden plants. Do not share cuttings, seedlings or plants that are invasive with neighbors and friends.

5. Use only seed mixes that are invasive plant-free. Check the ingredients of seed mixes to make sure invasive plants are not included. Buy seed mixes from reputable sources that guarantee the purity and content of their seed. Take your regional native plant list with you when you buy the mix.

6. Use weed-free soil and mulch mix. Some invasive plants are introduced because they were contaminants in landfill soil and mulch mixes. Purchase from reputable manufacturers that guarantee the purity or weed-free content of their soil and mulch mixes. Look for a tag that says "Certified weed-free."

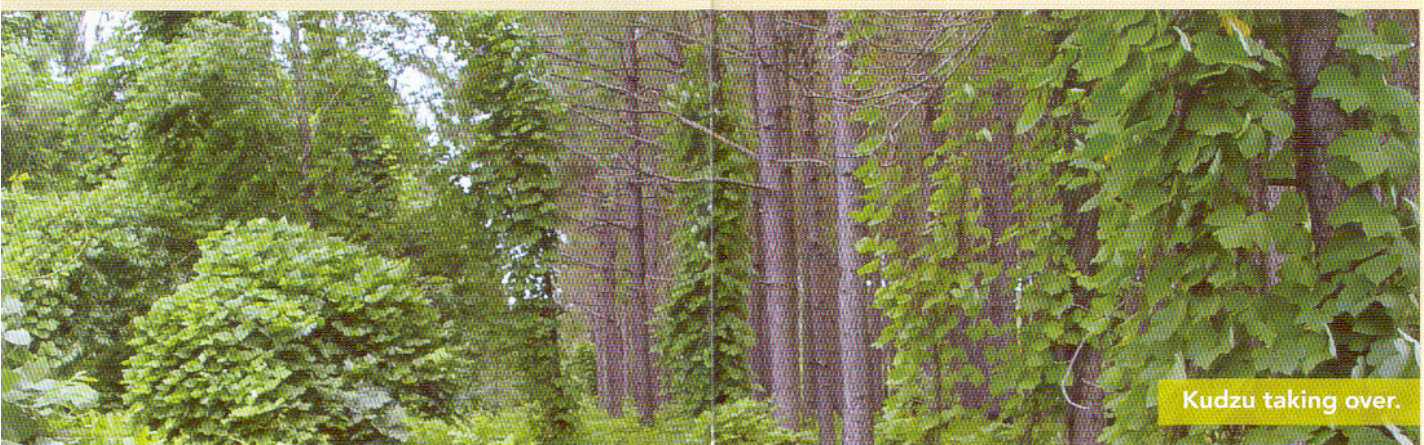
7. Be especially careful with aquatic plants. Don't just dump them! Invasive aquatic plants are often introduced as attractive water garden and aquarium decorations.

8. Keep an eye on new sprouts and volunteers. Invasive plants can come from anywhere and spread very quickly. Some make attractive additions to our gardens but can spread very quickly by producing lots of seedlings. Control your invasive garden plants by hand-pulling or mowing unwanted seedlings to prevent them from growing to maturity. Be aware of what is coming up in your yard and take care to control these new invasives.

The plant that ate the South - Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*) infests at least 7 million acres in the Southeastern U.S.

9. Dispose of invasive plants carefully. When disposing of invasive plant material consider whether there are any seeds, fruits or cuttings that could re-sprout. At a minimum, bag these materials to help prevent their spread. If it is permitted in your area and can be safely done, consider burning the plant material.

10. If you can't part with your invasive plant, remember – contain it, control it or cage it. Please be responsible. If you have a plant in your garden that has invasive tendencies, take special steps to keep it in your garden such as inserting root barriers, trimming regularly or harvesting fruits or seeds before they are spread.



Kudzu taking over.