Invasive Species You Should Never Plant in Nevada and Placer Counties, CA.

by the Redbud Chapter, California Native Plant Society

Most of us assume that when we visit a garden center or plant nursery to purchase some plants for our gardens, or hire a landscape designer or contractor to install them for us, that we can rest assured that the plants are not what is termed ‘invasive’. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and the horticulture trade has been a major pathway for the introduction of invasive species into California. It is up to all of us to educate ourselves, refuse to purchase these invasive plants and instead purchase and plant only non-invasive species. In particular, select some of our beautiful California native plants, which evolved here, are adapted to our climate and soils, and provide the most environmental benefits.

Invasive species are those that not only can escape gardens and naturalize in the wild, but also spread aggressively, outcompeting native plants and thus reducing our biodiversity as well as creating maintenance nightmares and often increasing wildfire risk. If you already have any of these invasive plants growing on your property, the wise thing to is to remove them, as they will continue to spread and create problems for you, your neighbors and the environment.

Following is a compilation of non-native species that are currently invasive threats within our two counties. These plants, or their seeds, may be available from garden centers and nurseries, and they should be avoided by home gardeners, herbalists, designers and landscapers. For California native plant alternatives, refer to our Redbud CNPS Chapter’s document: “Recommended California Native Plants for Nevada and Placer County Landscapes”.

**Invasive Trees:**
- *Ailanthus altissima* – Tree of Heaven
- *Crataegus monogyna* – English Hawthorn
- *Ficus carica* – Common Fig (invasive in riparian habitats-monitor for escapees)
- *Robinia pseudoacacia* – Black Locust
- *Triadica sebifera* – Chinese Tallow Tree

**Invasive Shrubs:**
- *Cytisus scoparius* – Scotch Broom
- *Cytisus striatus* – Portuguese Broom
- *Contoneaster lacteus* – Parney’s Cotoneaster
- *Spartium junceum* – Spanish Broom
- *Genista monspessulana* – French Broom
- *Pyracantha species* – Firethorn
- *Rubus armeniacus* – Himalayan blackberry
- *Cynara cardunculus* – Artichoke Thistle
- *Cynoglossum officinale* – Common Houndstongue
- *Digitalis purpurea* – Foxglove
- *Dipsacus fullonum* – Fullers’ Teasel
- *Euphorbia oblongata* – Eggleaf Spurge
- *Foeniculum vulgare* – Sweet Fennel
- *Hypericum perforatum* – St. John’s Wort, Klamath Weed
- *Isatis tinctoria* – Dyer’s Woad
- *Lathyrus latifolius* – Perennial Sweetpea
- *Leucanthemum vulgare* – Oxeye Daisy
- *Lepidium latifolium* – Perennial Pepperweed
- *Linaria spp.* – Toadflax

**Invasive Perennials:**
- *Cynoglossum officinale* – Common Houndstongue
- *Digitalis purpurea* – Foxglove
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**Invasive Groundcovers and Vines:**
- *Hedera helix* – English Ivy
Hedera canariensis – Algerian Ivy  
Sesbania punicea – Scarlet Wisteria  
Vinca major & Minor – Periwinkle & Dwarf Periwinkle  

**Invasive Grasses and Sedges:**  
Agrostis stolonifera – Creeping Bentgrass  
Briza maxima – Big Quaking Grass  
Cortaderia jubata – Andean Pampas Grass  
Cortaderia selloana – Uruguayan Pampas Grass  
Cynodon dactylon – Bermuda Grass  
Dactylis glomerata – Orchard Grass  
Festuca arundinacea – Reed Fescue, Tall Fescue  
Holcus lanatus – Common Velvetgrass  
Pennisetum setaceum – Green Fountain Grass  

[Saccharum ravennae – Ravennagrass, Hardy Pampas Grass  
Stipa tenuissima – Mexican Feathergrass]

**Invasive Aquatic Plants:**  
Arundo donax – Giant Reed  
Eichhornia crassipes – Common Water Hyacinth  
Egeria densa – Brazilian Water Weed  
Hydrilla verticillata – Hydrilla  
Iris pseudacorus – Yellowflag Iris  
Ludwigia hexapetala – Six Petal Water Primrose  
Lythrum salicaria – Purple Loosestrife  
Myriophyllum aquaticum – Parrot’s Feather  
Myriophyllum spicatum – Spike Watermilfoil

For photos and more information on these and other invasive plants, for alternative plants that are not invasive, and for state-wide invasive plant mapping, visit these websites:  
- [https://plantright.org/about-invasive-plants/plant-list/](https://plantright.org/about-invasive-plants/plant-list/)  
- [https://www.cal-ipc.org](https://www.cal-ipc.org)  
- [https://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/prevention/landscaping/dpp/?region=foothills](https://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/prevention/landscaping/dpp/?region=foothills)  
- [https://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/specieslist.cgi?namesoup=&countylist=NEV&countylist=PLA&calipc=1&plantcomm=any&format=photos&orderby=taxon](https://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/specieslist.cgi?namesoup=&countylist=NEV&countylist=PLA&calipc=1&plantcomm=any&format=photos&orderby=taxon)  
- [https://calscape.org/](https://calscape.org/)

**Broom Busters:** Scotch, French, Spanish and Portuguese Broom are all extremely invasive and highly flammable, so if you have any of these growing on your property, eliminate them. This process takes several years, as broom seed pods explode, sending seeds flying far and wide and the seeds can be viable for up to 30 years. Nevada County Fire Safe Council provides use of their brush and weed wrenches/extractigators for removing larger broom and other noxious shrubs. Small broom seedlings can be pulled by hand when the soil is moist. Never allow a broom plant to set seed; when you see those yellow broom flowers appear, get pulling immediately! There are opportunities to join in group broom pulls in both counties via the California Native Plant Society, the Fire Safe Council and Firewise Community Efforts.

Flowers of typical broom plant  
Older plants are **very flammable**  
Pulling broom with weed wrenches