

Alternatives to Invasive Plants (Suitable for Ocean County)

Invasive plants have large numbers of seeds with high germination, and they spread rapidly through vigorous vegetative growth. They can be spread by wind, birds and even a gardener's footsteps. They compete with native plants and crops for nutrients and pollinators and can change soil pH and inhibit growth of natives. When native plants are replaced, wildlife habitats can be destroyed; thereby, leading to the extinction of native animal species.

What can you do to stop this damage?

- ✓ Learn which plants are invasive in your area.
- ✓ Use only native plants or non-invasive alternatives.
- ✓ Remove and replace invasive plants with natives.
- ✓ As a last resort, apply herbicide according to product directions.

Some invasives found in New Jersey, along with native plant alternatives:

Invasive: *Euonymus alatus*, Burning Bush

Alternatives: *Vaccinium corymbosum*, highbush blueberry; *Aronia arbutifolia*, red chokeberry; *Fothergilla gardenii*, dwarf fothergilla; *Fothergilla major*, large fothergilla

Invasive: *Lythrum salicaria*, Purple Loosestrife

Alternatives: *Eupatorium fistulosum*, Joe Pye weed; *Lobelia cardinalis*, cardinal flower

Invasive: *Berberis thunbergii*, Japanese Barberry

Alternatives: *Vaccinium corymbosum* (above), *Clethra alnifolia*, sweet pepperbush; *Lindera benzoin*, spicebush

Invasive: *Acer platanoides*, Norway Maple

Alternatives: *Acer rubrum*, red maple; *Amelanchier arborea*, serviceberry

Invasive: *Lonicera japonica*, Japanese honeysuckle

Alternatives: *Lonicera sempervirens*, trumpet honeysuckle; *Lonicera dioica*, limber honeysuckle

For more information on native plants, go to:

<http://njaes.rutgers.edu/njriparianforestbuffers/nativeplants.htm>

<http://trails.rutgers.edu/natives.htm>

<http://www.npsnj.org> <http://cjisst.org>

Checklist for April

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- ✓ Divide and transplant overcrowded perennials such as chrysanthemums, delphiniums and daylilies. Additional plants can be traded, given to friends, or moved to a new area of the garden. Penn State Extension Fact Sheet "**Dividing Perennials**"
<http://extension.psu.edu/plants/gardening/fact-sheets/perennial-garden/dividing-perennials>
- ✓ Plant annual seeds. Thin out direct-seeded crops as they sprout.
- ✓ Deadhead wilting tulip or daffodil flowers. Continue to feed and care for the plants until the foliage has died back naturally.

Indoor Plants

- ✓ Pinch back house plants to generate new and fuller growth as they react to the longer days and brighter light.

Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Plant large trees and shrubs by the end of the month, before the weather becomes too warm. Rutgers "**How to plant a tree if plants could Talk: Tree Planting**"
<http://ifplantscouldtalk.rutgers.edu/slideshow/swf/slideshow.asp?show=tree>

Lawn

- ✓ Sharpen lawnmower blade to prevent tearing grass tips. Set it at 2 ½-3 inches.
- ✓ Leave grass clippings on the lawn.