

## “PLANTS I WISHED I HAD NEVER PLANTED”

Where do you start? There are so many if you have been gardening for a while. And there are different reasons you wished you hadn't planted it; it's a thug, it's invasive, it escaped into the woods, it spreads everywhere, it didn't stand up to the hype, etc. And you may hate it, but the next gardener loves it. Sometimes it just depends on where it is planted; is it in a formal bed, in a bed by itself or in a cottage garden setting? Do you grow it in part sun, when it would prefer full sun? Is it in poor soil or rich soil? Sometimes the conditions are enough to make it either loved or hated. Let's look at a few of the plants that your fellow gardeners despise.

**Old fashion Daylilies (ditch lilies)** *Hemerocallis fulva*: I would caution you to never plant in a flowerbed that you want something else to grow in, they will crowd out other plants. But they are loved by those that plant them in a border bed by themselves. It makes a beautiful display when in bloom.

**Cleome**, “spider flowers”: they reseed everywhere, but they do pull up easily. Just beware of the barbs on the stems. They are lovely when you bloom and have a long bloom time.

**Tradescantia**: spiderwort: they spread rapidly and you have to dig them up to thin, you can't simply pull them. They also get that ugly foliage in late spring/early summer. They are pretty when in bloom. I have a love-hate relationship with them.

**Obedient Plant** *Physostegia virginiana* is not very obedient. I love it, most gardeners hate it. It spread by runners. It does seem better behaved in part shade and poor soil. It is a member of the mint family.

**Campanula family**, especially Cherry bells: I grow them in part shade and poor soil and they are well behaved. But other gardeners grow them in full sun and say they spread too much. Again they are fairly easy to pull.

**Cypress vine** *Ipomoea quamoclit* is a great summer bloomer but boy does it reseed-everywhere! Is it worth it to have those gorgeous red blooms all summer?

**Chinese Latern**, *Physalis alkekengi* another garden thug that readily reseeds.

**Houttynia**, Chameloeon plant: They say it is a spreader, will even grow in concrete and you'll never get rid of it.

**Variegated Artemesia** will run rampant, but it does pull pretty easy. Mine has reverted but to the green variety.

**Allium tuberosum** readily reseeds if you don't deadhead. It is a beautiful bloomer and the summer pollinators LOVE it.

**Monkey grass** *Liriope muscari* If you get the clumping form you're ok. But if you get the spreading variety, *Liriope spicata*, it is not a friendly neighbor. I don't think you can ever completely get rid of it.

**Vinca** has a beautiful little flower, long blooming but...it is an escape artist. Once it gets into the woods, Katy bar the door, you have a big problem.

I think we can all agree that you **never, ever** plant **bamboo** or **mint** *Mentha* in the ground. I have had good luck with mint planted in containers, not set too close to any soil. The containers will keep it in check. But set the container on soil, the roots will find their way out and planting

the container in the soil is unadvisable also. I'm not sure I would trust bamboo planted in a container. That's another one you will fight for the rest of your life. And if it spreads into your neighbors' yard, you're not the most popular person on the block. There are clumping varieties available, maybe in a container.

**English Ivy**, *Hedera helix* is another that should never be planted. It's hard on trees and bricks. Sometimes your neighbor has it planted and it come through the fence to visit, not very neighborly.

If we're talking about plants that are true invasives, there is privet, burning bush, Bradford pears, kudzu, purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria* and Japanese Honeysuckle *Lonicera japonica*. These plants are detrimental to our environment. They can wipe out natives in a heartbeat. Privet, burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) and Bradford Pears reseed everywhere with the help of birds. Kudzu, purple loosestrife and Japanese honeysuckle will smother out their competition.

Some of our natives can be garden thugs. "We" don't call them invasive, according to the scholars, because they are native to our area. Hummm???? But some of them can be aggressive, thugs, or ill-behaved in the right setting. **Trumpet vine** *Campsis radicans* is a great example. The hummingbirds love the red/orange blooms but that plant will come up everywhere and it does not pull easily. You might try it in a pot, if you have to have it. **HorseTail Rush** *Equisetum hyemale* may be the leader of the thugs! Your best bet is to grow it in a container with no holes. But like mint and bamboo, never plant it in the soil. It will come up everywhere, even through cracks in brick path ways, and it laughs at Round-up. One of my least favorite native plants is **River Oats** *Chasmanthium latifolium*! They are a reseeding nightmare. Yikes! Try to cut the seed heads off before they go to seed but they also spread by runners and they do not pull up. Yes, they are pretty but at what cost? I'm sure they have some great qualities in the right setting.

There are many plant thugs out there, so beware of what you are planting; read the tags closely, check for key words, and ask questions. One gardener's favorite might be a thorn in your side.

An "**invasive species**" is **defined** as a species that is "Non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration; and, Whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. "(Executive Order 13112). Native plants are not considered invasive. They could be spreaders or thugs.

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