A Guide For Plants and Your Home
(What Not to Plant)

As a homeowner, there are a lot of considerations to make in regard to landscaping: What plants should I choose to have in my yard?, Where should I plant them?, How do I plant them? But, one of the most important considerations that might often be overlooked is "Am I choosing invasive plants or plants that are native and beneficial to the surrounding ecosystem?"

WHAT IS AN INVASIVE PLANT?

An "invasive" plant, is another word for an introduced species that has become an environmental weed pest, or, a plant that grows aggressively, spreads, and displaces other plants. Harmful invasives overrun wild areas where land has been disturbed. Invasive species outcompete surrounding native plants by:

- reproducing in large quantities
- tolerating many soil types and weather conditions
- spreading easily and efficiently, far beyond the area of initial introduction, usually by wind, water, or animals
- growing rapidly, in turn displacing slower growing plants
- spreading rampantly since they have no natural enemies, neither insect nor disease when found outside their native range

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO ME AS A HOMEOWNER?

Or perhaps more appropriately, why should I avoid these plants, especially if they're attractive and grow well? Invasives should be avoided in planting choices because, while they may be attractive to the eye, they are threatening our native environments. They displace native plants and degrade habitat for native insects, birds, and animals. In addition, these plants can spread, escape and cause landscape

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THESE INVASIVE PLANTS IN CHATHAM?

Privet (Ligustrum vulgare): As homeowners we may not always see the debilitating effects of this plant because seeds are easily pulled up when young or cut with the lawnmower if in the lawn. But, as a prolific producer of seed, which is redistributed by birds, this plant is spread far from its original area. Privet forms dense, impenetrable thickets that crowd out more desirable plants. It invades natural areas, including stream edges, open woods, and roadsides making it important to reduce and avoid as a planting choice.

Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria): Though an attractive summer flowering plant, Purple Loosestrife is a hardy perennial which can rapidly degrade wetlands by outcompeting and replacing native grasses, sedges, and other flowering plants that provide a higher quality source of nutrition for wildlife. The highly invasive nature of the plant allows it to form dense strands that restrict native wetland plant species, including some federally endangered species.

Bush Honeysuckle (Lonicera maackii): These rapidly spreading shrubs form dense stands that crowd and shade out native species. Early leaf development is particularly harmful to spring wildflowers that bloom before native trees and shrubs have leafed out. The shrubs may compete with native honeysuckles for pollinators, resulting in reduced seed develpment for native species.

Autumn/Russian Olive (Elaeagnus umbellata): This tree is another rapidly growing, prolific seed producer that establishes itself in disturbed sites where it shades out other plants that need direct sunlight. It is widely spread by birds and can easily adapt to many sites, including areas with infertile soil.

Black Locust (Robinia pseudoacacia): Like other invasive species, these trees spread and crowd out native vegetation, doing so via root suckers. They grow quite rapidly and are great producers of nectar which may allow them to outcompete other species for pollinators.

Scotch Broom (Cystisus scoparius): This plant grows so dense that it is often impenetrable and prevents the establishment of native plants. It spreads by large production of long lived seeds and eliminates forage sites for deer, being slightly toxic and typically unpalatable to animals. It makes reforestation difficult and creates a high fire hazard.

Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora): This prolific shrub forms dense, impenetrable thickets that crowd and shade out native species. Each individual plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds per year that remain viable for up to 20 years. The fruits are sought after by birds and mammals, which then disperse the seeds. These shrubs are highly competitive for soil nutrients and can lower crop yields in surrounding fields, which is why we want to limit them from spreading.

Look to the "What to Plant" handout for native alternatives.

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Burning Bush (Euonymus alatus):

This bush has the ability to brighten up anyone's day in the fall with its brilliant scarlet leaves, however, it's not the best landscaping choice. Since birds disperse the seeds of this plant, it spreads extensively from its original planting ground. Burning bush can form dense thickets, threatening native plants by crowding and shading. Often, below the plant, literally hundreds of seedlings can be found. Burning bush should be avoided because it threatens a variety of habitats such as forests, coastal scrublands, fields and prairies. In addition, it continues to be used as an ornamental, thus continuing its spread into the environment.

Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus altissima):

This attractive and easily spread tree has the ability to reproduce both by seeds and by sprouts allowing it to quickly dominate disturbed areas. It is extremely tolerant of poor soil conditions and has been known to grow even in cement cracks. It thrives in disturbed forests or edges. Dense thickets displace native species and can rapidly take over fields and meadows.

Norway Maple (Acer platanoides):

Widely planted as an ornamental tree, this maple has seeded into roadsides, wetland edges, and forests, and may outcompete our native Sugar Maple. Dense shade under its canopy reduces species of wildflowers and other tree seedlings.

Japanese Barberry (Berberis thunbergii):

Japanese Barberry has spread from plantings, taking over pastures, woodlands, and ledges. It forms thorny thickets in young woodlands, preventing native herbaceous and shrub growth. Although it provides food for wildlife, the damage it does outweighs the good.

There are many other plants that have also become quite prominent; inhabitating our wild spaces and taking over disturbed areas. These plants are also considered invasive and problematic in Chatham even though they aren't top choices for planting and/or purchasing. Below is a list of some of these other invasive plants that you might commonly come across and should be aware of:

- Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum)
- Oriental Bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus)
- Garlic Mustard (Alliaria petiolata)
- Common Reed (Phragmites australis)
- Yellow Iris (Iris pseudacorus)
- Sycamore Maple (Acer pseudoplatanus)
- Porcelain berry (Ampelopsis brevipedunculata)

For a complete list of harmful invasive plants, contact the Conservation Office at:

261 George Ryder Road
Chatham, MA 02633
(508) 945-5164
www.chatham-ma.gov
Town Departments
Department of Health and Environment
Conservation Division

For more ideas about some alternatives, look to our other handout: **A Guide For Plants and Your Home (What To Plant)** as well as the following organizations and/or websites:

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England
invasives.eeb.uconn.edu/ipane
Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association
www.mnla.com
New England Wildflower Society
www.newfs.org
Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel
www.northeastans.org
The Following Websites:
www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov
www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/pdf
More_Than_Just_Yard.pdf

A Guide For Plants and Your Home
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Have you ever wondered what kinds of plants would be good for your yard or want some alternative ideas to those invasive plants that tend to take over? Do you have a conservation restriction and need more information about what you can plant? Interested in showcasing some of the Cape's natural plant life, attracting native wildlife and saving money? If your answer is yes, to any

WHAT IS A NATIVE PLANT?

Native, or indigenous plants, are plants that have evolved over thousands of years in a particular region. They have adapted to the geography, hydrology, and climate of that region. They occur in communities, meaning they have evolved together with other plants. As a result, a community of native plants provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife species.

WHY SHOULD I USE NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants provide a beautiful, hardy, drought resistant, low maintenance landscape while benefiting the environment. Once established, they save time and money by eliminating or significantly reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, water and lawn maintenance equipment.

On the rest of this page you will find some suggestions for plants that will offer more to the environment, and you, once you choose to put them in place over any invasive species. For more information on invasive species please refer to: **A Guide for Plants and Your Home (What Not to Plant)** or contact the Conservation Office:

261 George Ryder Road
Chatham, MA 02633
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Problem Plant	Alternatives
Autumn Olive (Elaeagnus umbellata)	Chokeberry(Aronia arbutifolia) *Highbush cranberry (Viburnum trilobum)* Witch Alder (Fothergilla gardenii) Inkberry (Ilex glabra) Winterberry (Ilex verticillata)
Japanese barberry (Berberis thumbergii)	Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica) Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) Chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia) Highbush Cranberry (Viburnum trilobum) *Virginia Sweetspire (Itea virginica)* Winterberry (Ilex verticillata)
Winged euonymus (Burning Bush) (Euonymus alatus)	Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica) Highbush Blueberry (Vaccinium corymbosum) Chokeberry (Aronia arbutifolia) Highbush Cranberry (Viburnum trilobum) Witch Alder (Fothergilla gardenii) Summersweet (Clethra alnifolia)
Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria)	Beebalm (Monarda didyma) Swamp Milkweed (Asclepias incarnata) Blue Giant Hyssop (Agastache foeniculum) Joe pye Weed (Eupatorium dubium) Purple Coneflower (Echinacea pupurea)
Norway Maple (Acer platanoides)	*Red Maple (Acer Rubrum)* Sugar Maple (Acer saccharum) Red Oak (Quercus rubra) White Oak (Quercus veluntina) *American Sycamore (Platanus occidentalis)* Eastern cottonwood (Populus deltoids)

Highbush Cranberry

Virginia Sweetspire

Red Maple

American Sycamore

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Problem Plant	**Alternatives**
Privet (Ligustrum vulgare)	Inkberry Holly (Ilex glabra) Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica) *Carolina Rhododendron (Rhododendron minus pars.)*
Bush (Amur) Honeysuckle (Lonicera maackii)	Serviceberry (Amelanchier spp.) Holly (Ilex) deciduous spp. Viburnum (Viburnum spp.)
Multiflora Rose (Rosa multiflora)	*Climbing Prairie Rose (Rosa setigera)*
Black Locust (Robinia pseudoacacia)	Hawthorns (Crataegus sp.) Sassafras (Sassafras albidum) Sumacs (Rhus sp.) Birches (Betula spp.) *Pitch pine (Pinus rigida)* Eastern red cedar (Juniperus virginiana)
Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus altissima)	Box Elder (Acer negundo) Downy Serviceberry (Amelanchier arborea) *Sassafras (Sassafras albidum)*
Scotch Broom (Cystissus scoparius)	Bayberry (Myrica pensylvanica) Beach Plum (Prunus maritim Mormon Tea (Ephedra spp.)

Carolina Rhododendron

Climbing Prairie Rose

Sassafras

Pitch Pine

For more information about invasive plants and why they are harmful, look to our other handout: **A Guide For Plants and Your Home (What Not to Plant)**. If you're interested in more ideas for alternative plants look to the following organizations and/or websites:

The United States National Arboretum
www.usna.usda.gov

EarthWorks of Boston
www.earthworksboston.org

Center for Plant Conservation
www.centerforplantconservation.org

National Wildlife Federation
www.nwf.org
(Your Yard - Native Plant Guide)

National Parks Conservation Association
www.npca.org

The Following Organizations:
Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program
New England Botanical Club
Massachusetts Native Plants Committee

The Following Websites:
http://www.caes.state.ct.us/SpecialFeatures/NativeAlternatives.pdf
http://www.newfs.org/conserve/docs/invalt2.pdf