

For More Information

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
 Inland Fisheries
 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/water/environmentconcerns/nuisance_plants/

Texas Wildscapes
 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744
www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildscapes

Native Plant Society of Texas
www.npsot.org/

The Nature Conservancy
 Invasive Species Initiative
<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/>

Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
 4801 LaCrosse Avenue, Austin, TX 78739
www.wildflower.org/
www.texasinvasives.org/
www.invasive.org/



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The Dangers of Invasive Species



Good Native Plant Choices

- Mountain Laurel
- Indian Grass
- Side oats Grama
- Buffalo Grass
- Chinkapin Oak
- Autumn Sage
- Turk's Cap
- Pickernel Weed
- Yaupon
- Yellow Bells (Esparanza)
- Cardinal Flower
- Big Muhly
- Mexican Feather Grass
- Columbine
- Coral Honeysuckle
- Native Salvia species
- White Limestone Honeysuckle
- Blue Mistflower
- Coral Berry
- Flame Acanthus
- Redbud trees
- Agarita
- Virginia Creeper
- Mexican Plum

Some Common Exotics To Avoid

- Japanese Honeysuckle
- Bamboo
- Chinese Tallow
- Chinaberry
- Pyracantha
- Wax-leaf Ligustrum (Privet)
- Water Hyacinth
- Water Lettuce
- Water Spinach
- Salvinia
- Salt Cedar
- Giant Cane
- Asian Jasmine
- Eleagnus
- Cryptocoryne beckettii*

You will want to ensure the plants selected are native to your area.



Wax-leaf Ligustrum (Privet)



Chinese Tallow



Japanese Honeysuckle

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The Dangers of Invasive Species

“What harm can there be in planting one plant in my backyard? I’m going to care for it. There is a very small area for it to grow in and it needs my care to survive” — or does it?

Many exotic species get introduced just this easily and become significant environmental problems as a result. Others are flushed down the storm drain, thrown in the compost pile or released on the side of the road daily. But what is the real problem?

These species, usually brought from an exotic location and protected in our care until we tire of them, are introduced to a spot where they have no predators or disease control and quickly reproduce in an area of unchecked growth. They begin to compete with native species that require similar habitat niches and that may be in limited supply. The native species is often at a disadvantage because it is having to deal with diseases, parasites and predators that the exotic is currently not impacted by. As a result, the exotic thrives and the native declines.

What Else Can You Tell Me?

Exotic invasive species have been responsible for changing the water flow and quality of lakes, changing the nature and quality of terrestrial habitats and have contributed to the decline of certain native species – some of which are very rare.



Effects of Salt Cedar. This is what remains of the river.

For Instance:

The Chinese Tallow, introduced in Central Texas as a landscape plant to provide fall color has become a threat to the coastal prairie. It has changed thousands of acres of prairie habitat into tallow forests, removing much needed nesting and shelter habitat for the endangered Attwater Prairie Chicken, and other species of concern in the process.

Salt Cedar, introduced as an effective wind break and stream bank stabilizer in much of West Texas, has proven to be a water hog, thriving along the Rio Grande and other significant waterways at the expense of water no longer available down stream. It has also choked out several native species, producing a dense growth the sun cannot penetrate.



Spring Lake before invasives removal.

Aquatic invasives have resulted in millions of dollars being spent to reclaim lakes and maintain fish habitat and restore wetlands to allow fishing, boating and other activities we enjoy.

These invasions are not without impact in other areas. Funds are diverted from needed research and management programs to remove and control these pests. Research, personnel and funding is lost to projects, management programs and native species restoration.

Water quality is a major issue in Texas. Wetlands are significant in maintaining water quality by filtering storm runoff and controlling inundation. Many invasive species have demonstrated a direct threat to water quality by changing the nature of wetlands, drying them out and creating an upland situation.

Your Role in Environmental Stewardship.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF AUSTIN

Ligustrum chokes out native grasses in Austin.

Native plant, animal and insect species work together in a natural harmony controlling excessive development of any one species at the expense of another. This makes these species a better choice for our landscaping and other purposes.

Native plants will cost us less, generally they use less water, are more adapted to the region and so require fewer pesticides. They use their natural resources better, resulting in less fertilization needs. They are less likely to result in huge expenditures related to controlling or mitigating damages resulting from their use.

Native species are the optimum choice for wildlife habitat restoration or enhancement. While birds will eat berries from China berry or Chinese tallow, there is no evidence these berries provide their nutritional needs and plenty of evidence that the seeds transplanted by the birds degrade the habitat for other species.