

# VA DCR Adds Thirteen New Plants to the Invasive Plant Species List

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When I was a young gardener, “Invasive plants” were not even a thing. In recent years I’ve removed way more than one plant that I thought was a good guy when I had planted it, only to find out later that it was on the invasive plant list. And, I’ll bet you have, too. The gorgeous flowers and lush foliage of exotic plants can be quite enticing. But now that we know more about how some of them behave badly in our environment, we can take a bit different view.

Removing invasive plants from our own gardens is certainly a top priority goal and the easiest part. A more challenging goal will be getting invasive plants off the nursery and big box store shelves. Less well-informed gardeners will buy them as we did many years ago because they like how the plants look, and because they don’t know the potential harm. And, the sellers make their profits. This is going to require a lot of good-will effort on our part until we can convince the VA General Assembly to do something official. The nursery lobby is pretty strong, and the challenge to environmentally responsible gardeners is not easy.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has recently identified 13 plants that have been added to the [Virginia Invasive Plant Species List](#).

## New to the Virginia DCR *Invasive Plant Species List* - October, 2024

|  |   |
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| Nandina ( <i>Nandina domestica</i> )   | Fountain grass ( <i>Cenchrus purpurascens</i> ) |
| Butterflybush ( <i>Buddleja davidii</i> )                                      | Italian arum ( <i>Arum italicum</i> )           |
| Leatherleaf mahonia ( <i>Mahonia bealei</i> )                                  | Incised fumewort ( <i>Corydalis incisa</i> )    |
| Chinese tallow-tree ( <i>Triadica sebifera</i> )                               | Trifoliate orange ( <i>Citrus trifoliata</i> )  |
| Two-horned trapa ( <i>Trapa bispinosa</i> var. <i>iinumai</i> )                | Ravenna-grass ( <i>Tripsidium ravennae</i> )    |
| Sweet autumn clematis ( <i>Clematis terniflora</i> )                           | Curled pondweed ( <i>Potamogeton crispus</i> )  |
| Floating primrose-willow ( <i>Ludwigia peploides</i> var. <i>glabrescens</i> ) |   |

Three of the bushes on this new list have been favorites among VA gardeners for many years: Nandina, Butterfly Bush and Leatherleaf Mahonia. Most of us have probably had some of these in our landscapes or gardens at one time, and hopefully we have removed them or are in the process of doing so.

**Nandina** – *Nandina domestica* – is very popular in landscapes because of its long-lasting red berries. Often called Heavenly Bamboo, Nandina is native to China and Japan and was introduced to the US as an evergreen ornamental plant. Part of its popularity may be that it has no serious insect or disease issues. It can reproduce vegetatively through wandering roots or by seeds spread by wildlife. All parts of the plant contain cyanide and can be toxic to humans and wildlife.

Nandina (*Nandina domestica*)



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**Butterfly Bush** - *Buddleja davidii* – is popular in landscapes and gardens because of the many cultivars that have been developed to show off a wide variety of rich colors and luscious large flower plumes. It is a rapidly growing deciduous perennial shrub that is native to Tibet and south-central China. While it does attract butterflies, it does not provide host plant services (esp. food) for their larvae (caterpillars), and it crowds out the native plants that do.

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*)



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**Leatherleaf Mahonia** - *Mahonia bealei* – may be a bit less popular than the other two, but I do run into it in a lot of gardens I visit. An evergreen shrub native to western China, it was brought to the US as an ornamental landscape plant with its striking yellow flowers and distinctive gray-blue berries. It suffers no serious

insect or disease problems, and it will spread by suckers and by seeds. It crowds out native species, causing environmental and economic damage.

Please visit the GPMGA webpage where one of our HOPE teams has posted a resource called [“Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants That are Still Available in Nurseries.”](#) Three of the plants on this new list were already on our radar when we created this document, but now we may need to look at some others. (Note: this document includes only those invasive plants that are still easily available for you to purchase. No kudzu or Japanese stiltgrass here.)

Leatherleaf Mahonia (*Mahonia bealei*)



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