

**HJR527 Invasive Plant Species Workgroup
September 16, 2021
Pocahontas State Park, Chesterfield, Virginia**

WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Nathan Burrell, DCR
Larry Nichols, VDACS
David Gianino, VDACS
Neal Beasley, VNLA
Glenda Booth, Audubon Society of Northern Virginia
Christopher Brown, VNLA
John Burke, Fairfax County Park Authority
Alex Fisher, The Nature Conservancy
Michael Flessner, Virginia Tech
Jim Hurley, Virginia Native Plants Society
Martin Krebs, VDOT
Stephen Living, DWR
Carla Passarello, Garden Club of Virginia
Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort
Ben Rowe, Virginia Farm Bureau
Beck Stanley, VAC
Nancy Vehrs, Virginia Native Plant Society
Rod Walker, Blue Ridge PRISM
Ed Zimmer, VDOF

OTHERS PRESENT

Susan Gitlin
Joel Maddux, VDACS
Tom Smith, DCR
Michael Fletcher, DCR

OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Burrell called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. He reminded attendees that the meeting would be following the current CDC protocols regarding masks.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

REVISED: 1/20/2022 1:30 PM

Mr. Burrell advised that comments received prior to the meeting had been incorporated into the draft minutes. He noted that Mr. Hurley had additional changes.

Approval of meeting minutes was deferred until the October meeting. Mr. Burrell asked that members provide any additional comments no later than Wednesday, September 22.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE HORTICULTURE PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT HAS BEEN SEEN AS EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION IN OTHER STATES – Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort

Mr. Regelbrugge gave a presentation regarding the Horticulture Perspective on What has been seen as Effective Collaboration in Other States. A copy of Mr. Regelbrugge's presentation is included as Attachment #1.

The presentation included the following comments:

AmericanHort is a national trade organization representing "horticulture" nursery and floriculture growers, breeders, supply chain).

AmericanHort:

- Was represented on the Federal Invasive Species Advisory Committee for three terms.
- Active in "St. Louis Declaration" (codes of conduct)
- Clearinghouse for regional and state partners

High Level Observations concerning Invasives:

- "Wicked problem" - complex, no easy solutions
- Science, history, values, preferences, harms vs. benefits (real or perceived)...dynamic!
- Local, regional differences further complicate search for consensus approaches
- Prevention, containment, management

Mr. Regelbrugge noted that there is a tremendous amount of history which includes 500 years of European settlement. The environment is not static, but dynamic. It is important to note how plants contributed to making human habitation possible.

While there are efforts, the tools for dealing with prevention, eradication, and containment are incomplete.

Mr. Regelbrugge reviewed the initiative that took shape in California. The effort was led by a non-government organization called Sustainable Conservation which seeks to address highly complex environmental problems.

In the California initiative agreement emerged that some plants were seen as having untenable environmental consequences and should be avoided. There was equal emphasis regarding identifying and promoting alternative plants.

Mr. Regelbrugge noted that it is important to remember that every tool in the toolkit is imperfect. Many times there are well-intended mandates that are directed at agencies already under resourced.

At the national level, the voluntary conversations that have been nurtured are seeing more-lasting change.

Mr. Regelbrugge commented that whatever ever comes out of these dialogues it is extremely important that plant restrictions should focus on alternatives.

Ms. Booth asked if the major product of the California exercise was to prepare a list of banned plants.

Mr. Regelbrugge responded that the right mix of priorities and outcomes for Virginia might not be what happened in California. In that process there was identification and consensus around a group of plants that have serious environmental consequences. He noted that this was a voluntary and consensual basis, but that there was a timeline for removing designated plants from sale. Some plants have been phased out of commercial production.

Mr. Regelbrugge noted that California is the nation's largest crop and greenhouse state. A significant portion of that product is exported in Virginia there is marketing of products to the north and south.

Mr. Regelbrugge advised that a component in the California process focused on an annual retail outlet survey. He commended that he is not aware of similar data for Virginia. The collection of data in California was a byproduct of a years' long process of building consensus.

Mr. Hurley noted that in California a 15-year process some seven species had been removed from the trade. An additional forty or so plants that were not recommended.

Mr. Regelbrugge advised that California has a regulatory list that is tiered with different rankings with different action levels or responses.

Mr. Walker asked what impact this effort has had on California.

Mr. Regelbrugge replied that in many cases there are deeply ingrained behaviors and some products are institutionalized. He advised that to change behavior and educate takes time. Virginia can look at the model, but it is ultimately about choices and consequences.

Mr. Hurley asked if Mr. Regelbrugge had reviewed the Delaware process.

Mr. Regelbrugge noted that the Delaware statute is a new invasive species law that has regulatory authority that will go into effect next year. The process removes 35-40 plants out of trade by legislative action. He commented that Delaware would likely find that legislative and regulatory tools are imperfect solutions.

Mr. Regelbrugge concluded by saying that there is merit in a regional approach, but that every state has its own structure of authorities and political dynamics.

Ms. Booth asked if Mr. Regelbrugge had recommendations for the group.

Mr. Regelbrugge responding that he was not empowered to speak for the Virginia industry and would therefore refrain from making specific suggestions. He advised that he wanted to bring to the table some of the practices that have been successful. He noted that it is important that the process build consensus around priorities.

Mr. Hurley asked Mr. Brown about what might happen in Delaware in 2022.

Mr. Brown responded that in general there are many nursery plants that are not on the chopping block.

Mr. Hurley noted that only two percent of plants sold regionally are plants of concern.

Mr. Brown noted that his nursery sells from Hampton Roads to Long Island. He noted that Delaware is not one of the target states for his business so he does not anticipate a huge impact.

Mr. Hurley asked about the economic impact to Virginia.

Mr. Brown responded that he did not have access to that information. He advised that it is not appropriate for VLNA to ask for that information. The only way to gather that information would likely be through a legislative process.

Mr. Hurley commented that, at this point, the financial and economic impact of any action is unknown.

Mr. Brown noted that every nursery is different and the economic impact will vary based on nursery size and other considerations. He advised that makes it difficult to represent a consensus among members.

Ms. Passarello asked if the information would be available at the state level.

Mr. Gianino commented that VDACS only requires a registration fee from nursery growers and dealers. There is no requirement to provide sales records or a list of plants in inventory. VDACS does not collect taxes on nursery stock.

Mr. Hurley noted that, at this point, the scientific impact of the plants is noted, but there is no data on the economic impact. He asserted that there needs to be a conversation regarding economic impact.

Mr. Walker advised that there is some information regarding aggregate sizes in terms of the agricultural industry in Virginia including the 2019 Virginia census on horticultural resources.

Mr. Walker commented that since the last meeting he had worked on a framework regarding how to address the economic impact while minimizing the harm to the industry. There is the notion that some plants should be removed from trade and that growers should be reimbursed for loss product through taxpayer money.

Mr. Brown asked about the source of the taxpayer money.

A member commented that this would have to come before the General Assembly. One solution would be to place sales tax revenue from retail operations and put that into a special

fund. The fund could be used to address invasive species concerns as well as reimburse growers. The money is already being sequestered by the state. This might require a unified approach to the General Assembly.

Mr. Brown commented that it was encouraging to see the group moving to a point to address the big issue. He did note that most in attendance have a different option for the solution. He suggested that the group needs to reach a starting point from which to build a viable solution. The solution will not be perfect, but will steer the group toward a greater understanding of various needs and opinions.

Mr. Brown commented that there is a need to understand different viewpoints and what makes each nursery different or similar. He noted that the biggest concern is the time required to develop the processes. There could be frustration because there is not an obvious immediate impact.

Mr. Living advised that while there may be a need for a long-term process there were likely some actions that could be accomplished quickly. For example, education is an important component that could begin immediately. The process could involve what other states have in place in terms of practices and regulations.

Mr. Brown noted that since the last recession, many businesses are no longer at the table. The nursery industry has reevaluated the impact of banning certain plants. He advised that the industry does self-regulate. If consumers do not want a certain product it be phased out of retail sales.

A member asked if there was a model that addresses the development and propagation of a species that does not require the force of legislative action to ban sales.

Mr. Hurley noted that the concerns with Bradford pear and noted that sales remain high. He asked Mr. Brown to comment on applying a process of removing Bradford pear from sales.

Mr. Brown responded that the process does not happen overnight. He advised that it often takes millions of dollars to develop a plant and then three to five years after that for it to be released commercially. He noted that most homeowners do not see Bradford pear as invasive, but that it is invasive in unmaintained areas.

Mr. Beasley noted that Bradford pear is also a problem as it gets older. They are inclined to split or fall apart.

Ms. Passarello commented that this was a matter of education. However, there are limits to education. Who is the audience? She noted that her audience would understand the problem with Bradford pear, but the standard urbanite moving to the suburbs would not necessarily understand the concerns. The question is how to reach those who are not gardeners.

Mr. Brown responded that he agreed with the need for education, but that there are limits when thousands of plants continue to be released into the landscape. There is a need to educate the general public. But he noted that even among the workgroup the message could be interpreted differently.

Ms. Passarello suggested that one way to educate the purchaser would be to provide information at the point of sale. She noted that much of the garden club activity was geared toward floral design. Many invasives are used because of their visual appeal. There is an attempt to educate without forbidding the use of certain species. She noted that this is a big debate within the Garden Clubs of Virginia.

Mr. Living suggested that education could be a slower process at the point of sale as the workgroup continues research regarding acceptable replacements. He asked if the natural resource and conservation organizations could work with the industry regarding sterile alternatives to problem invasives.

Mr. Brown noted that it was important to agree on the process. He advised there is difficulty when specific plants are addressed. There would be more common ground with a viable solution. There is a process for noxious weeds that is defined. There needs to be common ground and an understanding regarding the economic side. When a process is developed, it can be applied to specific plants.

Mr. Brown noted that labeling certain species of plants does not take into account the process that the industry has regarding the development of seedless or sterile varieties.

Mr. Hurley asked if there would be a way to remove a certain species from the trade while continuing to allow other that aren't invasive.

Mr. Brown responded that with multiple industries and personnel, it is important to have common ground and define the process.

Ms. Booth noted that the workgroup had been asked to come up with solutions. She noted that Mr. Brown approved the noxious weeds process, but what would a good process be for other invasives. What should the workgroup be recommending?

Mr. Brown replied that it was important to understand that these were emotional issues. He noted that the noxious weeds process defines plants from a scientific level. That tells the impact to the environment. He advised that it is important to understand the impact on humans as well.

Mr. Zimmer commented that the two sides of the conversation appeared to be 1) the need to get certain plants out of the way and 2) the need for a process for removing something from trade. He suggested that there might be three to five plants that the workgroup would agree should be removed from the trade now. Working to remove those could establish a process that could be taken to the General Assembly.

Mr. Brown noted that the purpose of the workgroup was not to recommend the removal of certain plants through legislation.

Mr. Burrell reminded the workgroup that the purpose is to look at statutory or non-statutory solutions to reduce, or eliminate the sale of invasive species.

Mr. Burrell observed that some comments are beginning to be formulated into recommendations. He noted that there appears to be a need for some continuation of the workgroup or another group to continue to address these issues.

Mr. Burrell noted that the workgroup is charged with providing a report to the General Assembly by the end of the year.

Mr. Walker suggested that if there were thirty or sixty plants to be considered over time there could be a conversation to develop a strategy for each of those plants. Some may be small enough to be removed right away. Others would be more problematic and would require public input and research.

Mr. Brown responded that while there could be a strategy for each plant, the process should be the same. He commented that it was not fair for the organizations at the table to speak on behalf of hundreds of businesses from a data standpoint.

Mr. Gianino noted that a process to evaluate a plant as commercially viable would require statutory changes.

Mr. Walker advised that the discussion was a change in the process. There needs to be a determination of what is commercially viable for small operations. There will be a need to define the horticultural characteristics of species. There will also be a need to ask the legislature to fund additional resources for the development of alternatives.

Mr. Burrell noted that the recommendation seemed to be the need to define commercial viability and the development of a list of criteria to determine what that means.

Mr. Regelbrugge noted that the data exists on a very high level. There is a census of horticultural specialists that is done every year that addresses some of these issues on a national level. It is not Virginia specific.

Mr. Smith noted that while the discussion has focused on the economic impact to the industry, the true economic impact must also consider the other side which is the cost of managing and controlling invasive plants that are already out there or dealing with them once they are introduced by a neighbor or others. In addition, he noted an objection to the idea of a commercially viable safe harbor threshold as there clearly are invasive species commonly sold in the trade that present clear economic and ecological harm and need to be addressed/removed from the trade within a set time limit that would minimize the negative impact to the industry.

Mr. Brown noted that the recommendation is to define commercially viable, it is also important to note the cost of cleanup.

Mr. Smith noted that the two processes in place are the noxious weeds list and the DCR Virginia Invasive Plant Species List. The noxious weeds list is managed by VDACS and goes through a rigorous process, the DCR list is an educational non-regulatory list developed via an internationally recognized ranking system adopted by the Virginia Invasive Species Working Group.

Ms. Passarello asked if the phrase “commercially viable” could be removed from the requirements for the noxious weeds list.

Mr. Brown noted that there were plants on the DCR list that no one grows.

Mr. Smith commented that the DCR list is developed using an internationally recognized ranking system, endorsed by the Virginia Species Working Group, a legislatively codified group. Items on the list go through a rigorous process. It is important to remember that this list is not a regulatory process, but is out there for education. Removing the commercially viable option would still require the use of the risk management tool.

Mr. Brown responded that there remains no process for that action.

Mr. Gianino summarized the following two recommendations based on workgroup discussion.

1. The term “commercially viable” should be clearly defined.
2. The term “commercially viable” should be removed from the law.

Mr. Gianino noted that the law defines noxious weeds as plants detrimental to waterways and the environment. He asked if there was a way that would address the sale of the plant when it is below the threshold of estimated impact to the environment.

Mr. Brown stated that the group as assembled did not have enough data or business representation to make that determination.

A member suggested that language that prevents the assessment of a species be removed but language be included to determine the impact of each plant. If the intent is to determine the economic impact if a plant is removed, the workgroup should reach out to make sure that there is an adequate representation of growers in making that determination.

Mr. Brown again affirmed his opinion that commercially viable needed a firm definition.

Mr. Hurley suggested that economic impact could be included in a revision of the noxious weed law.

Mr. Living commented that a third option would be some assessment of the economic impact to the industry be included in the noxious weed process as part of the work of the noxious weed committee.

Mr. Hurley advised that he would echo Mr. Smith’s comments regarding defining a particular level of economic impact.

Mr. Walker noted that the requirement is not whether the plant is commercially viable, but whether it is currently being produced and sold in state.

Mr. Living noted that there is no current pathway to address plants that are commercially viable.

Mr. Gianino advised that the workgroup could make recommendations to allow certain groups to go through the process. He noted that would require statutory changes.

Ms. Booth asked that a list of recommendations heard during the meetings be presented at the next meeting. She advised that she had prepared an education labeling proposal that she would like to present at the October meeting.

Mr. Stanley suggested that the next meeting focus on education, not statutory changes.

Mr. Burrell noted that the workgroup discussed education extensively at the August meeting. That enabled the group to move forward to the current discussion.

Mr. Burrell noted that the workgroup has two additional meetings scheduled.

Mr. Burrell noted that the requirement of the workgroup is to have recommendations to the General Assembly prior to the start of the 2022 Session. He advised that staff had a significant amount of writing work ahead.

Mr. Beasley asked if there would be an open comment period.

Mr. Burrell noted that the recommendations would go out for public comment prior to the report being submitted to the General Assembly.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Beatty
Fairfax

Ms. Beatty advised that she was the Propagation Chair for the Potomac Chapter of the Virginia Native Plants Society. She noted that in Northern Virginia ivy trees used to be a natural part of the landscape but are now the backbone for the invasive species growing on them. She noted that she has been working with a group of high school students at a local dog park. She noted

that park is heavily infested and as of yet, they have not been able to eradicate the invasive plants.

Ms. Beatty thanked the group for the work they are doing and stated that she hoped something good comes from the process.

Brent Hunsinger

Mr. Hunsinger advised that he had been working with this issue off and on for the last eight years. He commented that it is heartening that there is finally a body moving forward to determine a course of action. He observed that it is great to focus on the process rather than individual plants.

Mr. Hunsinger noted that while there were many problematic plants, it was important to be cognizant of people who own businesses. He expressed appreciation for the cautious approach.

Ruth Douglass

Ms. Douglass read the following statement that was prepared by the Board of the Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council:

The Board of the Mid-Atlantic Invasive Plant Council (MAIPC) would like to offer this brief statement in support of funding and implementing invasive species management and policy.

The science about the detrimental effects of invasive species on wildlife and the quality of the eastern forest is abundant and clear. Funding the removal of invasive species in and around high-quality forests to protect habitat for wildlife and future generations is imperative to protecting forest health and ecosystem resources. The ecological restoration of deteriorated parkland by removing invasive species, protecting trees and supporting native species helps to reduce the further spread of unwanted species while providing healthy habitat and useable passive recreation areas.

MAIPC recommends implementing policies that encourage the use of native plants and ban or otherwise deter the use of noxious and invasive weeds. By Virginia joining in the work of neighboring states, who have already begun to ban the sale of invasive species, the Mid-Atlantic will see the most benefit to its natural resources.

In particular, banning the sale or use of the following plants in Virginia is strongly recommended:

Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*)

Bushclover (*Lespedeza cuneata* spp.)

Beach Sedge (*Carex kobomugi*)

Fountain grass (*Pennisetum* spp.)

Water Hyacinth (*Pontederia crassipes*)

Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*)

Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)

Privet (*Ligustrum* spp.)

Honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.)

Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

Mimosa Silk Tree (*Albizia julibrissin*)

Princess Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*)

Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*)

Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*, *Berberis vulgaris*)

Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*)

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Chocolate Vine (*Akebia quinata*)

Colonial Bentgrass (*Agrostis capillaris*)

Moneywort (*Lysimachia mummularia*)

Chinese Silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)

Running Bamboo species

Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* spp.)
Japanese spiraea (*Spiraea japonica*)
Ivy-leaved Speedwell (*Veronica hederifolia*)
Linden viburnum (*Viburnum dilatatum*)
Double-File viburnum (*V. plicatum*)
Siebold viburnum (*V. sieboldii*)
Tea viburnum (*V. setigerum*)
Invasive Wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*, *Wisteria floribunda*)
Crown Vetch (*Securigera varia*)
Thorny Olive (*Elaeagnus pungens*)
White Mulberry (*Morus alba*)
Periwinkle (*Vinca* spp.)
Italian Arum (*Arum italicum*)

Susan Gitlin

Ms. Gitlin commented that funding the removal of invasive plants is important, but that it does not make sense to continue putting invasive plants into the environment. She noted that the cooperative approach discussed at the meeting was a great start. She advised that one alternative not discussed is a punitive approach where growers who knowingly plant invasives are responsible for the cleanup. She gave the example of Bradford pear.

ADJOURN

Mr. Burrell noted that the final two meetings of the workgroup were as follows:

- October 21, 2021, 10:00 a.m. in the Swift Creek Dining Hall at Pocahontas State Park.
- November 10, 10:00 a.m., in the Powhatan Dining Hall at Pocahontas State Park.

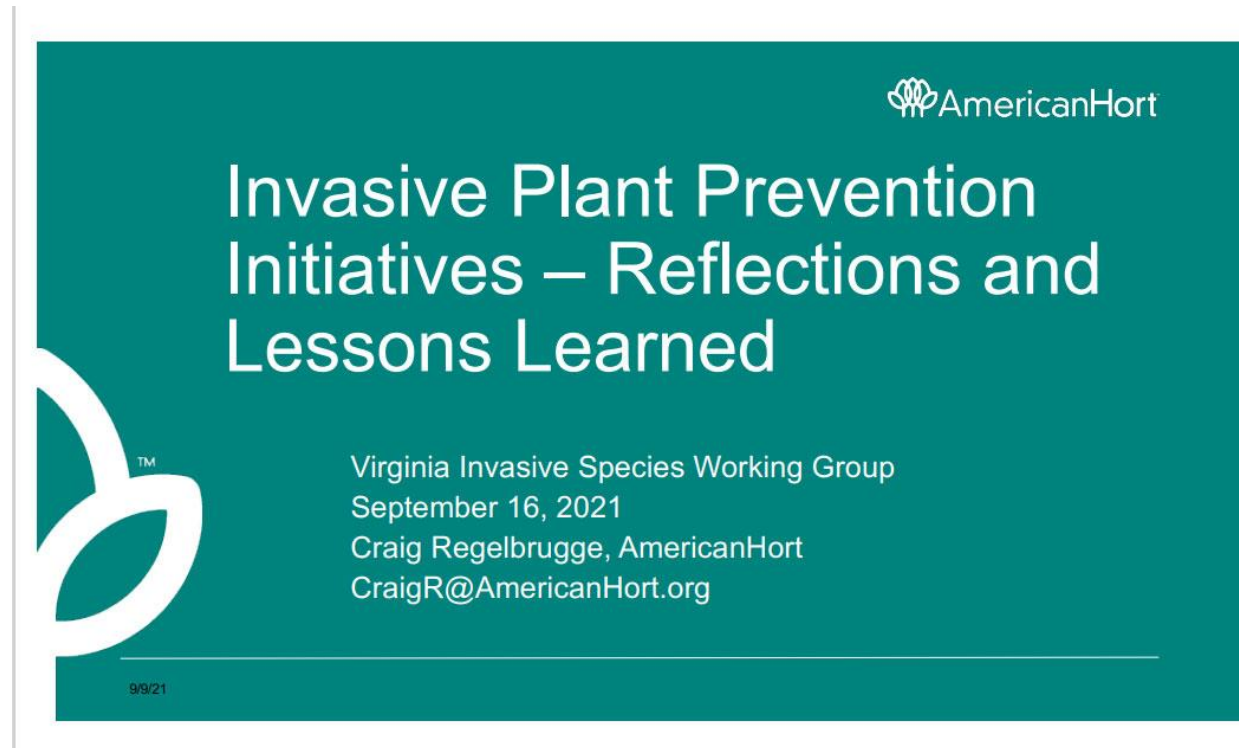
Mr. Gianino advised the group to be prepared to discuss the following at the next meeting:

- Increased use of native plants
- Tax us
- Labeling

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

ATTACHMENT #1

Presentation by Craig Regelbrugge



The slide features a teal background with white text and graphics. In the top right corner is the AmericanHort logo, which consists of a stylized plant icon followed by the text 'AmericanHort'. The main title, 'Invasive Plant Prevention Initiatives – Reflections and Lessons Learned', is centered in a large, bold, white font. Below the title, the following text is displayed: 'Virginia Invasive Species Working Group', 'September 16, 2021', 'Craig Regelbrugge, AmericanHort', and 'CraigR@AmericanHort.org'. On the left side of the slide, there is a large, white, stylized graphic of a leaf or petal with a small 'TM' trademark symbol. At the bottom left, the date '9/9/21' is printed in a small font.

About AmericanHort and HRI

- National trade organization representing “horticulture” (nursery and floriculture growers, breeders, supply chain)
 - Represent ~14,000 industry firms
 - Mostly family farms and small businesses
- Horticultural Research Institute – AmericanHort Foundation (research and innovation hub)
 - \$17 million endowment – investment income funds competitive grants
 - Leverage federal, other sources



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On Invasive Plants...

- Federal Invasive Species Advisory Committee member for 3 terms
- Active in “St. Louis Declaration” (codes of conduct)
- Have directly funded research (e.g., Plant Risk Evaluation tool, breeding for sterility, etc.)
- Clearinghouse for regional and state partners



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High Level Observations

- “Wicked problem” – complex, no easy solutions
- Science, history, values, preferences, harms vs. benefits (real or perceived)...dynamic!
- Local, regional differences further complicate search for consensus approaches
- Prevention, containment, management



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Regional, State Approaches

- Legislative, Regulatory, Voluntary/Consensus
- Predictive tools, assessment protocols
- Listing protocols, associated actions
- Outreach, awareness, education. Examples:
 - Plants of concern and why
 - Identification of alternatives



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**Few things that start in California
stay in California.**



Is that ever a good thing?!

9/9/21

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f t i y [CREATE ACCOUNT](#) [SIGN IN](#)

[The List](#) [About Invasive Plants](#) [How to Plant Right](#) [Our Approach](#) [About Us](#) [Blog](#)



STEERING COMMITTEE

PlantRight™ was designed by an alliance of leaders from the horticulture industry, environmental groups, scientists, and government agencies. This group, known as California Horticultural Invasives Prevention (Cal-HIP), acts as a steering committee for PlantRight and convenes on a quarterly basis.

Steering Committee

- Ann-Marie Benz, *California Native Plant Society*
- Elizabeth Brusati, *California Department of Fish and Wildlife*
- Jutta Burger, *California Invasive Plant Council*
- Stephanie Falzone, *Sustainable Conservation*
- Jim Folsom, *Huntington Botanical Gardens*
- Doug Johnson, *California Invasive Plant Council*
- Dean Kelch, *California Department of Food and Agriculture*
- John Keller, *Monrovia*
- John Randall, *The Nature Conservancy*
- Craig Regelbrugge, *AmericanHort*
- Nicholas Staddon, *Everde Growers*
- Chris Zanobini, *Plant California Alliance*

Plant List Committee

- Randy Baldwin, *San Marcos Growers*
- Jutta Burger, *California Invasive Plant Council*
- Cathy Edger, former Board Member *Association of Professional Landscape Designers*
- Dean Kelch, *California Department of Food and Agriculture*
- Taylor Lewis, *University of California Davis, Arboretum*
- Nicholas Staddon, *Everde Growers*
- Ron Vanderhoff, *Roger's Gardens*

Plant Risk Evaluator (PRE) Advisory Group

- Elizabeth Brusati, *California Department of Fish and Wildlife*
- Jutta Burger, *California Invasive Plant Council*
- Harvey Cotten, *Huntsville Botanical Garden & Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association*
- Doug Johnson, *California Invasive Plant Council*
- John Keller, *Monrovia*
- Matt Kramer, *Ball Horticultural*
- Debbie Lonnee, *Bailey Nurseries*
- Jan Merryweather, *Sustainable Conservation*
- Margaret Pooler, *United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Arboretum*
- John Randall, *The Nature Conservancy*
- Craig Regelbrugge, *AmericanHort*
- Chris Selin, *Bailey Nurseries*
- Nicholas Staddon, *Everde Growers*
- Dave Waetjen, *University of California Davis Information Center for the Environment*



Invasive Plant List

Invasiveness depends on your location

Plants may be invasive in some regions of California, and not invasive in others. This map shows you the California regions used by our list. The plants listed below are invasive in one or more regions as shown on this map.

How are these regions determined?

The regions shown on this map are based on the [Sunset Climate Zones](#), which are determined by an area's rainfall, temperature range, wind, humidity, and length of growing season.

These are the Sunset Climate Zones which correspond with each region:

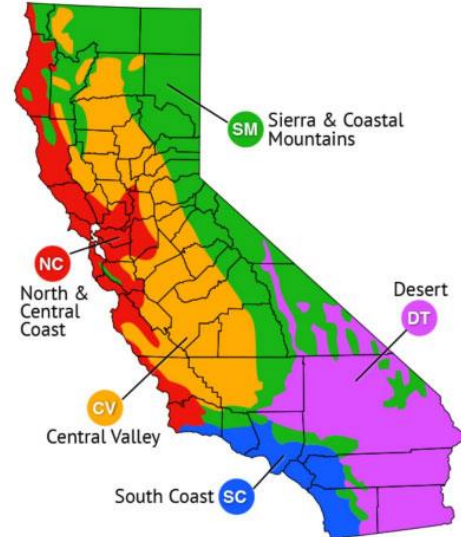
- Sierra and Coastal Mountains:** Sunset Zones 1-3
- Central Valley:** Sunset Zones 7-9
- Desert:** Sunset Zones 10-13
- North and Central Coast:** Sunset Zones 14-17
- South Coast:** Sunset Zones 18-24

Printable List

The list is also available in PDF format for printing.

[Invasive Plant List \(PDF\)](#)

[Las Plantas Invasoras en Español \(PDF\)](#)



Plants to Avoid

PlantRight has identified seven priority invasive plants that are sold for ornamental use in California. We urge all California homeowners, landscapers, and other plant buyers to avoid these seven plants for use in regions of California where they are invasive. We are working with California's nurseries and garden centers to eliminate these plants from circulation and promote non-invasive alternatives.

[See the priority invasive plants](#)

Success stories: the retired plant list

With the help of retailers, growers, and landscaping professionals, several invasive plants have largely been phased out of California's supply chain and replaced with non-invasive alternatives. Because these invasive garden plants are rarely sold at retail, we have "retired" them from our PlantRight List.

[The retired invasive plant list](#)

Buy Right

Buy only non-invasive plants.

Our list of [invasive plants to avoid](#) also has information about good, non-invasive alternatives you can use in your garden.

When you buy plants from a [PlantRight nursery partner](#), you can be sure you're buying a noninvasive plant. That's because all of our nursery partners have completed an employee education program and pledged not to sell any plant from [PlantRight's invasive plants list](#).

[Find a PlantRight Nursery Partner](#)

Sell Right

If you sell plants, become a PlantRight partner.

It's a simple way to show your customers that you understand the issue and you care about California's natural environment.

PlantRight provides practical, easy-to-access training and recognizes nurseries in our [online retail directory](#) that commit to selling exclusively non-invasive plants.

Priority Invasive Garden Plants & Alternatives

Mouse over or touch a photo to see a recommended alternative plant. Below each plant are links to more information about that plant, including suggestions for beautiful, non-invasive replacements. If you aren't looking for an alternative for a specific invasive plant, see this page that compiles all of our suggested [non-invasive alternatives](#).



Reflections

- Legislative/regulatory prohibitions vs. voluntary initiatives that result from dialogue and consensus-building
- Role of a credible convener
- Positive focus, managed change
- Alternatives focus should allow for non-invasive cultivars



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NON-INVASIVE BARBERRY NON-INVASIVE GRASSES
DEER-RESISTANT THUJA

WorryFree
Solutions for Success

WORRYFREE: SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS LICENSED GROWERS
GROWER RESOURCES

The WorryFree® Collections
SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS

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AmericanHort

Thoughts, Questions?

Thank You!



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ATTACHMENT #2

Mr. Gianino prepared the following summary of workgroup recommendations:

HJ527 Meeting – September 16 meeting: Recommendations received from the Work group

Jim Hurley: That a study be performed to identify and quantify the economic impact of the sale of invasive plants have in VA. Additionally, that it be studied to understand 1) how much money is made by selling the plants listed on DCR's invasive species list, 2) what the financial impact would be if all those listed plant species were banned, and 3) identify what industries would be negatively impacted by banning the sale of all DCR's invasive plant species.

Rod Walker: That all species of plants listed on DCR's invasive species list must be labeled '**may be invasive**' at all points of sale. This would include nursery locations, retail establishments, and garden centers.

Additional recommendations include:

- Establish a revenue tax or sales tax generated from the sale of those plants on DCR's invasive plants list, which would be used for the management or mitigation efforts for those invasive plants.
- Establish a phase-out, where all plant species CURRENTLY on DCR's list will have a 5-10 year deadline before they become banned from being sold in the Commonwealth.
- Properly define the term 'commercially viable' in the Noxious Weeds Law. This definition should include information to the economic impact of sale of this plant species.
- Remove the phrase, 'except when in-state production of such living plant, or part thereof, is commercially viable or such living plant is commercially propagated in Virginia' from the Noxious Weeds Law.
- Educational campaign to reach all industries involved with the green industry as a whole, not just nurseries and retail establishments. Landscape professionals, home owners, and other members of the green industry.
- Recommendation that an invasive plant species group (long term) be established to carry out these issues and concerns and implementation of phasing-out the DCR's invasive plant species list.

- Develop a list of alternative plant species that would be suitable to replace the invasive plant species.

ATTACHMENT # 3

The following written comments are presented as received.

Carol A. Heiser, CBLP-1
Retired DWR Habitat Education Coordinator

Thank you for this opportunity to comment to the Virginia Invasive Species Workgroup. I believe the information you're gathering is a vital first step towards ensuring that new conservation strategies will be adopted and implemented across the Commonwealth by private and public landowners alike.

In my opinion, one of the greatest barriers or challenges to conservation is the cultural pressure to conform to antiquated ideals of landscape management, which focus heavily on the extensive use of turfgrass and other non-native ornamental plants, and that unfortunately have little to no benefit to the insects, birds and other wildlife we share our environment with. This adherence to conventional landscape uniformity is most often exemplified and enforced through Homeowner Association covenants, which are typically so restrictive as to preclude any ability of a resident to plant or promote a more naturalized landscape of native plants for the benefit of pollinators, birds, and other species.

There is precedent for attempting to reverse that trend: most recently, the state of Maryland passed House Bill 322, which became law on May 30, 2021 and will prohibit HOA's or other declarations or deeds from "imposing unreasonable limitations on low-impact landscaping under certain circumstances." Low-impact landscaping includes features such as rain gardens, which filter stormwater runoff and improve water quality, and also habitat gardens, such as pollinator gardens and meadow patches, which use native plants that support a high diversity of wildlife species.

Removing invasive plants and replacing them with native species are two best practices of low-impact, conservation landscape planning, management and maintenance (source: *The Eight Essential Elements of Conservation Landscaping*, CCLC – <https://www.chesapeakelandscape.org/resources/the-eight-essential-elements/>). I strongly believe that if we want to be successful as a collective in addressing and resolving the problem of invasive plant species in Virginia while simultaneously encouraging the public to purchase and use native plants instead, then we need to provide a mechanism by which landowners can easily create and sustain naturalized, native plant landscapes, without being penalized by restrictive covenants.

Please include in your recommendations to the Governor the idea of legislation that will not only reduce or eliminate the sale of non-native, invasive plants but that will **also** contain a provision for low-impact, naturalized landscaping practices that emphasize the use of native plants, as a viable alternative to conventional landscaping.

Below are a few resources that may be helpful in this endeavor:

Examples of Native Landscaping Legislation/ Ordinances

<https://www.marc.org/Environment/Air-Quality/pdf/NativeLandscapingOrdinances-4pg-June2013.aspx>

<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2019-12/Native%20Landscaping%20Ordinance%20Examples.pdf>

<https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/require-use-of-native-plants-vegetation-7/>

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Lauren Taylor
McLean, Virginia

First, thank you to all of you who are dedicating your time, energy, and resources to this important issue. I greatly appreciate your dedication and your attention to the gravity of the challenges before us.

Second, to date I have not heard the Working Group specifically discuss the estimated cost of an immediate ban on the sale of invasive plants in Virginia. I would like to address that here. By my research and calculations, with sources listed below:

Of the **90 plants** on the Virginia Invasive Plant Species List (1), approximately **40** are currently being sold by nurseries and growers. (this number could be higher).

Let's generously assume that these 40 species account for **10%** of total annual industry sales. *Note: this is a VERY high estimate. Merrifield Garden Center, e.g., carries over 7,500 varieties of plants.*

Horticulture operations in Virginia sold a total of **\$271 million** in floriculture, nursery, and specialty crops in 2019, the latest statistics available from USDA.(2)

Therefore, the total estimated sales of invasive plants per year, at 10% of \$271 million, is approximately **\$27.1 million**.

If we allow for **5** years of grower inventory in the nursery pipeline, then the total cost of compensating Virginia nurseries and growers to destroy ALL current inventory of invasive plants and prevent future sale and distribution is approximately 5 x \$27.1 million = **\$135.5 million**.

The total Virginia 2022 budget is **\$71.2 billion**.⁽³⁾

Therefore, the percentage of the total Virginia 2022 budget to *immediately* destroy existing inventory and compensate nurseries and growers is $\$135,500,000 / \$71,215,793,926 = 0.190\%$. In business, an amount of this percentage would be considered a rounding error (in government circles, "budget dust").

Short version: for 0.190% of Virginia's 2022 budget, we could immediately end the sale of invasive plants in the state without causing economic harm to the nurseries and growers, and stop the further intentional propagation and distribution of invasive plants in Virginia.

It is estimated that invasive species are costing Virginia more than **\$1 billion** annually.⁽⁴⁾ The message is clear: pay now, or pay far more later.

In addition, the governor's office has recently announced that Virginia finished the 2021 fiscal year with a record-breaking surplus of **\$2.6 billion**.⁽⁵⁾ I suggest we look there first for financial support for this proposal.

If my research or calculations are in error, I will stand corrected. Otherwise, I can see no sane nor valid reason for why we would do anything but the right thing — immediately ban the sale of all listed invasive species, destroy all existing inventory now, and compensate the nurseries and growers for their lost stock. Our farmers, land owners, pollinators, wildlife, and future generations will be grateful.

Thank you for your consideration."

Yours very truly,
Lauren Taylor
McLean, Virginia

(1) <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/nh-invasive-plant-list-2014.pdf>

(2) https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Virginia/Publications/Current_News_Release/2020/PRHORT_VA19.pdf

(3) <http://publicreports.dpb.virginia.gov/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=dwBudgetWiz&QLinks=Sec&selFieldList=SecretarialAreaCode&selTitleList=SecretarialAreaTitle&selChapterID=55&selValueColumns=Total+Dollars,Total+Positions&iptSubmitted=True&chkInitial=True&chkAmended=True&chkCaboose=True&iptFirstPageCall=False&iptShowInput=DontShow&iptShowToggle=Show&rdShowModes=Show>

(4) <https://albemarle.ext.vt.edu/programs/invasive-species.html> This includes plants, animals and fish, fungal, and insects combined. I could not find a breakdown by category; however the interrelation of many of these species (e.g., the invasive Tree of Heaven as a host plant for the invasive Spotted Lanternfly) makes an exact breakdown less important.

(5) <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2021/july/headline-898771-en.html>

Megan Lemmond

Roanoke

Thank you for your involvement with this issue. It's close to my heart, as I grew up here in the Roanoke valley, before moving out of state for college. After 20 years away, I returned home last year, and had the good fortune to buy my childhood home. It's truly shocked me to see how many of the native forests have turned into large groves of Alienanthus (Tree of Heaven). From small pockets of woodland in my neighborhood to the deep forests I grew up hiking, biodiversity is down and Trees of Heaven are everywhere. This changing scenery is what sparked my interest in native plants. I have a large lot, and I began ripping out the English ivy and replacing it slowly with native plants. It breaks my heart to go into garden centers and see them selling the same English ivy that I spent countless hours pulling off off trees, right next to other invasive plants that offer no home to the creatures that make up of local and migratory animal population.

So much of what has happened, and continues to happen, to our mountains, lands, and rivers seems irreversible, or too big to turn around. Thankfully, banning the sale of invasive plants and taking action to reduce the existing population on public lands is well within our reach. This is a simple and easy to implement policy change. I sincerely hope that Virginia can take the needed action.

Dr. Jessica Fleming, DO, RH (AHG)
Internal Medicine Resident, Virginia Tech Carilion
Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, President

Dear Mr. Burrell,

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It is with the hope that these comments extend their way into the Invasive Species Working group meeting, scheduled for Thursday 9/16.

Native bees pollinate 2-3 times as many crops and plants as honey bees. Native caterpillars comprise nearly 90% of baby bird diets, across innumerable bird species native to Virginia and other states. Our agricultural success as a nation is heavily reliant on pollinator success rates. Invasive species undermine pollinator biodiversity and in turn, ecosystem function. Native insect and native plant biodiversity is the crux of our nations' agricultural and ecosystem health. We must act to ban the sale of as many invasive species as possible now.

Our society has an enormous amount of work ahead of us in the mission to mitigate damage caused by invasive plant species already unleashed. In the 1800's, the government naively subsidized the planting of kudzu for erosion, which has destroyed massive swaths of rich forested areas two centuries later.

We must set the goal of stopping the spread of invasive plant species for the success of future generations. It will be difficult for stakeholders, like VNLA, and other corporate interests that benefit from habitat destruction for the sake of profit. But we must instill corporate responsibility as a doctrine in our organizations that have far reaching effects on landscapes for generations to come.

In the words of Lord James Bryce, anyone seeking to profit from the exploitation of our land will *"hurry to subdue and utilize nature, squandering her splendid gifts."* Financial markets and ecosystem preservation are not inherently mutually exclusive. We can help corporations recover profits by shifting sales to natives from invasives by increasing education. Virginia Native Plant Society's readership increased 200% in 2021 alone and neared a half a million views by August of this year.

As in the recent SB22 bill passed in Delaware, we must now partner across party lines and profit to non-profit sectors to protect our most valuable resources: our land, our topsoil, our ecosystems. Education is not enough. Banning the sale of invasive species is a requisite for progress. Now is the time. And if we don't do it, who else will?

References:

<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2011/10/native-bees-are-better-pollinators-honeybees>

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/lifestyle/2021/04/09/gardening-feathered-friends-and-environment/7088226002/>

<https://apirs.plants.ifas.ufl.edu/site/assets/files/381259/381259.pdf>

Sincerely,

Dr. Jessica Fleming, DO, RH (AHG)

Caroline Donnelly
Lexington

I am having a really difficult time ridding my property here in Lexington of English Ivy, Autumn Honeysuckle and Privet. There are lists of invasive species for the state of VA. Please be an advocate for native plants and put forth our desire for Native Plants to be carried at more local retail outlets. Thank you

Ramona N. Bearor
Staunton

It is beyond my comprehension why proven non-native invasive plants are still being sold by nurseries in this state. Hasn't the history with the Bradford/Callery Pear taught us anything?

Please take a stand against this practice continuing in Virginia and press for more nurseries to offer Virginia native plants (true native species, not cultivars!) for sale which would serve to aid the native insect and animals populations.

Thank you for considering my views,

Ramona N. Bearor

Elizabeth Mizell
Blue Ridge PRISM, Program Director

Dear Nathan and Larry,

Please accept the following recommendations specific to promoting the sale and use of native plants for inclusion in the upcoming minutes of the invasive plant work group. Thank you for organizing and facilitating this group. I plan to be at the meeting Thursday and look forward to the opportunity to meet you both in person.

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Respectfully,

Elizabeth Mizell

Recommendations for Promoting Native Plants

- Prohibit state agencies from selling or planting any plant on the DCR invasive list either through executive order, regulatory or statutory changes, recommend they use regional native plants when possible
 - Develop a state nursery to help increase production in support of growers to better develop the market and bridge the gap until growers can reach the needed capacity
 - Organize a state agency task force to create a framework for native plant use strategies on state-owned or managed lands and facilities
 - Develop specifications for the use of Virginia native plants on state lands and integrate those objectives into lands and facilities management plans
- Recommend statutory changes loosening restrictions around low level conservation plantings and homeowners associations (HOAs) similar to a recent bill passed in Maryland House Bill 322 to “prohibit HOA’s or other declarations or deeds from imposing unreasonable limitations on low-impact landscaping under certain circumstances. Low-impact landscaping includes features such as rain gardens, which filter stormwater runoff and improve water quality, and also habitat gardens, such as pollinator gardens and meadow patches, which use native plants that support a high diversity of wildlife species.”

In 2011, the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership (Partnership) was formed which includes partners from both state government and NGOs to *Identify and prioritize opportunities to collaborate on Virginia native plant communication and marketing efforts and form cohesive and coordinated messaging and strategies to increase local availability and use of native plants state-wide.*

<https://www.plantvirginiannatives.org/about-virginia-native-plant-marketing-partnership>

The Partnership has laid important groundwork around native plant education, developing partnerships, and developing an Action Plan with strategies dedicated to:

1. Increase collaboration and coordination among partners engaged in native plant education, communication and marketing;
 2. Increase Virginia Grown native plant stock;
 3. Increase the availability of native plants at local plant retailers; and,
 4. Increase demand and use of Virginia native plants by landscape and land use professions, homeowners, landscaping and demonstration restoration projects on public and private lands.
- Elevate/Enhance work of the Virginia Native Plant Marketing Partnership and the Regional Native Plant Campaigns and leverage that work to the benefit of the

horticultural industry- note that VNLA and Virginia Nursery Landscape Association are on the list of participating partners according to the Partnership website. This could include

- Full-time statewide coordinator for the Partnership -housed Va Tech Cooperative Extension (?) focused on education and outreach/marketing strategies
- Full-time statewide position working directly with growers and the state focused on native plant cultivation - developing native seed sources and plant stock in VA - housed in VDACS (?);
- Grants/awards to support work and growth of regional Native Plant Campaigns
- Implement recommendations of the Partnership Action Plan as appropriate
- Develop statewide marketing strategies that promote native plants and lead to general increased demand employing appropriate strategies informed by native plant social marketing campaigns launched in Virginia's Coastal Zone
- Assist Virginia growers as they transition away from invasive plants and develop native plant crops
 - Develop subsidies and grants for growers to help them and provide incentives to shift from invasive plants to native plant or non-invasive plants;
 - Grants for native plant research and other innovations in the industry related to propagation, logistics, and marketing
 - Direct payments for loss of income during 'sunset' periods or for a period of time after a plant has been declared a noxious weed - can assist in developing a new horticultural crop (native plants)
 - Identify economically viable native alternatives to currently marketed known invasive plants and develop marketing strategies around those plants
 - State nursery can help increase production in support of growers to better develop the market and bridge the gap until growers can reach the needed capacity
- Outreach and Education for the horticultural industry - reduce reliance on invasive plants through professional training
 - Ask horticultural industry groups to support the Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional (CBLP) certification program and offer CBLP continuing education credits for appropriate programs; support strengthening partnership and being more active in the Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council and CBLP
 - Industry groups to promote the use of native plants and publicize to their members the ecological and management problems caused by specific invasive plants
 - VNLA to work with members selling plants that have de minimis sales to convince them to stop selling those invasive plants or develop a plan for them to phase out
 - Look to the industry to make specific recommendations based on the needs of their constituents. Partner to help meet those needs.
- Strengthen funding for Virginia Conservation Assistance Program practices that use Virginia native plants
 - conservation landscaping

- rain gardens
 - constructed wetlands
 - bioretention
 - green roofs
 - living shorelines
 - vegetated conveyance system
-

Mark Campbell

Larry and Nathan,

We need to get control of the Callery Pear. It has invaded a lot of the riparian areas on my farm in Nelson County. The thorns are really long and super tough. Many farms have fenced out streams which has provided an ideal environment for Callery Pear invasion. Maybe some action could be taken on state owned property to eliminate them. There is a large patch of them at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton or at least on the edge of the property. I am glad that invasive species are getting some attention, but more needs to be done.

Thank you,
Mark Campbell

Lindsay Caplan

Hi Nathan,

I am writing in regards to HJR527; unfortunately I am unable to make the Thursday meeting in person, but have been told that all comments will be read aloud. Thank you!

I fully support HJR527 and the efforts to stop the spread of invasive species in Virginia. Invasive species are an ecological nightmare, turning our beautiful, diverse lands into monocultures that do not support wildlife and other plant species. Invasive plant species take over an estimated 1.7 new acres of land every year, and the longer we wait to pass legislation, the worse this disaster gets. There are plenty of non-invasive options that can be substituted instead of invasives for landscaping and agricultural purposes. There really is no excuse for their use.

Signed,
Lindsay Caplan

Heidi Allen

Dear Mr. Nichols and Mr. Burrell,

I am so pleased that the Invasive Species Working Group was put together. And, I understand how difficult it is to make decisions that affect not only the rights of home owners, but also the plant and landscape industry. It is sometimes hard for those of us that are environmentalists to understand the implications of banning the sale of even one species such as *Berberis thunbergii* (Japanese barberry).

But, we are at a point in time when decisions need to be made to our species as well as others that we share this planet with. Battling invasive species may seem like a worthless cause in comparison to larger climate change issues. But, it has been shown that invasive plants kill numerous trees and native plants, decrease carbon sequestration in forests, increase erosion, and raise the phosphorus and nitrogen levels in our streams. They have also been linked to a decline in song bird population and a rise in Lyme disease.

As someone who has spent years battling invasive plants and teaching other people about them I find the irony of people who will thank me numerous times for helping our park but are not willing to address what is in their backyard. Discuss the invasive plants in their back yard. Change is hard to do and creating change even harder. Trying to convince people that they should not purchase an ornamental plant because it may become invasive has not worked. At this time I feel that legislation is our only hope. I would like to offer one suggestion. Would it be easier and long time more effective if we started with EDRR (Early Detection and Rapid Response) species. These species are less valuable to the landscaping industry and we have a really good chance of eradicating them inside our parks and other natural areas.

I wish you the best of luck moving forward.

Heidi Allen

Beth Umberger

Dear Mr. Nichols,

I have worked in Stadium Woods on the Virginia Tech campus for the last ten years as a Master Naturalist and Master Gardener with thousands of student and community volunteers removing invasives. Our work in this remnant of an old growth forest has uncovered an amazing amount of biodiversity of native flora.

I am also involved in other projects that require removal of invasive plants which are seeding in at a rapid rate around our area.

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Callery pear is taking over abandoned farmland. Trees are covered in English ivy, Asiatic bittersweet and sometimes winter creeper. Along the 460 bypass between Blacksburg and Christiansburg where once red cedar, dogwood and red buds sprung up, it is now becoming a mat of callery pear. Johnson grass is increasingly appearing along roadsides and in fields. On rental properties in the town of Christiansburg and Blacksburg these invasive plants abound. Fence rows are becoming havens for Autumn olive, Asiatic bittersweet, and bush honey suckle. Privet and burning bush are very common along unmanaged creek beds, in yards, a wooded areas.

As I help to maintain several gardens and natural areas, I am commonly finding seedlings of English ivy, Asiatic bittersweet, burning bush, callery pear, and privet.

Some of the invasive plants are still sold in the horticultural industry.

I hope the state rules to forbid the sale of the following plants:

Pyrus calleryana CALLERY PEAR
Euonymus alatus BURNING BUSH
Ligustrum species PRIVET
Celastrus orbiculatus ASIATIC BITTERSWEET
Lonicera morrowii, Lonicera maackii, Lonicera tatarica BUSH HONEYSUCKLE
Elaeagnus umbellata AUTUMN OLIVE
Clematis paniculata SWEET AUTUMN CLEMATIS
Miscanthus sinensis CHINESE SILVER GRASS
Bergeris thunbergii JAPANESE BARBERRY
Hedera helix ENGLISH IVY
Euonymus fortunei WINTER CREEPER

These plants out compete native plants and provide very little support for native insects. Caterpillars are needed for song birds to their young. Our native bird and insect population are in decline. Allowing these plants to be sold adds to the problem of loss of native habitat.

Thank you,
Beth Umberger

***Carolyn Helmetsie
Vesuvius***

Mr. Burrell,

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I am a Virginia Master Gardener Volunteer who leads an annual native plant lab for new students for my unit. The definition of invasive plants is always emphasized with a hands-on session comparing invasive and native plants.

When handing out the Virginia Invasive Plant Species List during the lab, there is always a discussion about how many of these noxious plants are readily available at nurseries and box stores. All are offensive but the following plants seem to be most readily available: English Ivy, Japanese Barberry, Callery Pear, Japanese Spirea and Periwinkle. None of the plants on the invasive list should be available commercially as it provides normalcy for them by uninformed consumers. It can be expensive to eliminate these plants in your garden and there are plenty of excellent native alternative plants that people would buy if they were available.

I have enjoyed the Landscape with Virginia Natives Webinars series. Some of these Webinars have a thousand or more participants. Each session when speakers talk about native alternatives, questions ensue about availability. Although there are some excellent sources, the numbers are small and availability, especially shrubs, are limited in Virginia. If we are to eliminate invasive plants in Virginia, we need to have more sources for native plants available in the State. If the availability of native plants was widespread, more people would buy them. This is not a fad. Climate change is dictating that we must make changes to protect plants and all the animals that depend upon them. The best way is to have native plants made widely available in Virginia.

Carolyn Helmetsie

Corinne Steele

Larry Nichols,

Thank you for considering the end of invasive plants being sold in Virginia. This is a great step in supporting nature which supports us. This is an urgent matter and the sooner we get invasive plants out of the stores, the better. This will save money in the future by not having to eradicate wild areas of invasive plants.

People need educating about natives and non-natives. Educating the public costs near nothing but if invasive plants are allowed to be sold in stores, people will believe if the government allows them to be sold, it has to be good and not destructive.

The new housing developments going up all over Virginia are destroying current natural wild areas. Developers do not consider nature so they need incentives and educating as well. Not allowing invasive plants to be sold is a good way to educate them.

Please consider these recommendations:

Educate the public about Natives and Non-natives on social internet platforms, use the Virginia Native Plant Society for information and collaboration.

Put in the developers permits that 100% natives must be planted and keep all current native trees and shrubs on the property as much as possible.

Thank you from our future generations,

Corinne Steele

Monja Vadnais

Lorton

Good morning Nathan & Larry,

I understand you are part of Virginia's Invasive Species Working Group (WG) and are in discussing commercial viability and noxious weed status. Examples of some plants in question might include English Ivy, barberry, etc.

While I don't presume to understand the various sides of the argument, I would like to share our experience at our home in Lorton. We bought the property from a landscaper who planted English ivy, wisteria, crepe myrtles, nandina, and a ton of other pretty but what some consider invasive. Personally, I haven't seen an issue with the nandina. Crepe myrtles sprout all over but are easy to manage. English Ivy and wisteria are another story. We have been fighting these since we bought the house over 10 years ago. They simply will not go away. Over the last few years we have also found them in the woods and they are covering the fences, trees, shrubs, etc. If there is a hint of daylight, they are there. They seem like the Virginia version of slower moving kudzu.

I would strongly suggest the WG consider restricting the sale and propagation of these and other uncontrollable plants by identifying them as noxious weeds. Environmentally, it doesn't make sense to willfully allow their sale.

Recognizing there may be pushback from retailers and growers, I have a couple questions and thoughts:

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1. Growers - Are there growers in Virginia that grow and propagate these plants? To what extent? If they are unable to grow such plants, what percent of their revenue comes from their sale? Do they grow other plants or simply these?
2. Sellers – Presumably this is the bigger impact. What percent of inventory do the nurseries have that would fall under noxious weed? What percent of their revenue come from their sale? If they could no longer sell these plants, what impact would it have to their business? Can they justify/validate this?

In the end – unless a business is ONLY growing what may be classified as noxious plants, many can shift focus if given a bit of time. Some may be able to do so the very next growing season while others may require another year or two.

For those with a greater impact, suggest considering a financial incentive. Money usually talks and if set with key goals – Grow/sell more natives and don't grow/sell "noxious" plants – can be extremely effective. Financial items may simply be a grant for new seeds and/or starter plants, a tax credit, or even a simple stimulus type check. I think there is a lot of potential to be able to make things work for both sides but especially for our environment and our neighborhoods.

Happy to discuss further,

Monja Vadnais