

# OVERVIEW OF NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE PLANTS

## 1. What is a native plant?

The scientific-based definition of a “native plant” says that it occurs naturally in an ecoregion and habitat where, over the course of evolutionary time, it has adapted to physical conditions.

For more information about native plants in Maryland, visit the following link to a University of Maryland webpage: [Native Plants](#)

## 2. What is a non-native species?

“Native” “alien,” and “exotic” refer to whether or not a species was present in a given ecosystem before a given time: usually the date of European settlement. White oak *Quercus alba* is native to Maryland because it has been here for thousands of years. English boxwoods *Buxus sempervirens* are exotic because they were brought to North America by English colonists. So, non-natives are those that were not here before colonization by Europeans.

## 3. What is an invasive species?

The term “Invasive” denotes a species that when introduced - either intentionally or inadvertently into an ecosystem - aggressively establishes itself at the expense of native plants or animals. Mile-a-minute vine, with its amazing growth speed, nasty thorns, and ability to entirely smother native plant species is an example of a species that is both non-native and invasive. Kudzu, gypsy moths, and English sparrows are commonly known non-native invasive species. They can be mammals, birds, insects, reptiles, fish or shellfish, plants, viruses, fungi – any type of living organism.

“Invasive” is also commonly applied to species that cause economic difficulties in cultivated landscapes. The commonest examples of these species are the plants we refer to as “weeds”, many of which are in fact native species that aggressively invade our painstakingly cultivated gardens of exotic species.

## 4. Are all non-native species invasive?

In fact, most non-native species do not become invasive in either natural ecosystems or agricultural settings. While a subject of on-going research, it remains very difficult to predict whether an introduced non-native will become invasive. Because any non-native could become invasive or be detrimental to the ecosystem, the introduction of any non-native is a bad idea.

For more, visit the following Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) webpage: [Invasive and Exotic Species in Maryland](#)

## 5. What are the impacts of invasive species?

Invasive species can cause damage that far outweighs their numbers. They can have major effects on natural habitats and native species. In the U.S., 45% of species listed as rare, threatened or endangered are listed as such in part due to invasive species. It often takes years before an introduced, escaped

species begins to reproduce and spread to become invasive, an interval referred to as lag time. Once recognized, an invasive species can be present in such numbers that it is hugely expensive, or even impossible, to eradicate. For more, visit the following DNR webpage: [Invasive and Exotic Species in Maryland](#)

## 6. How do invasive plants get introduced into the environment and how do they spread?

Invasive species are introduced in a variety of ways, including:

- as goods such as plant products, firewood, hay, mulch or wood packaging;
- as live food imports;
- as horticultural imports; and
- through vehicles such as aircraft, commercial and recreational boats.

Invasive plants are spread by:

- Improper disposal of garden plants. Please do not recycle garden debris into public parks or open areas such as ditches. Never compost. Instead, bag and dispose at your local landfill.
- Unintentional dispersal. Without their natural predators and pathogens, invasive plants spread quickly all on their own!
- Intentionally as garden ornamentals. Please do not trade or purchase known invasive plants.

For more, visit the following Invasive Species Council of BC webpage: [Identify invasive species](#)

## 7. Are there regulations regarding invasive plants in Calvert County?

There are no specific regulations for Calvert County, but there are Maryland state regulations. There are zoning laws regarding non-residential development requirements: [Calvert County Zoning Ordinance for Landscaping](#)

### ***Tier 1 Invasive Plants***

The following plants are designated as Tier 1 invasive plants in Maryland. A person may not propagate, import, transfer, sell, purchase, transport, or introduce any living part of a Tier 1 invasive plant in the State. These restrictions do not apply to the transfer, lease, sale, or purchase of real property on which an invasive plant is located. (Are there penalties for breaking these laws? I found this – at [https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/maryland\\_invasive\\_plants\\_prevention\\_and\\_control.aspx](https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Pages/maryland_invasive_plants_prevention_and_control.aspx))

### **Penalties:**

- The Secretary may impose a civil penalty not to exceed \$500 for each violation.
- Title 12 Criminal Penalties

But I don't know what the Title 12 Criminal Penalties refers to)

Fig buttercup *Ficaria verna*

Shining cranesbill *Geranium lucidum*

Yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus*

Wintercreeper *Euonymus fortunei*

Amur honeysuckle *Lonicera maackii*

Incised fumewort *Corydalis incisa*

***Tier 2 Invasive Plants***

A person may not sell or offer for sale at a retail outlet a Tier 2 invasive plant unless the retail outlet posts in a conspicuous manner in proximity to all Tier 2 plant displays, a sign identifying the plants as Tier 2 plants.

A person may not provide landscaping services to plant or supply for planting a Tier 2 invasive plant unless the person provides to its customer a list of Tier 2 invasive plants.

Burning bush *Euonymus alatus*

Blunt-leaved or Border privet *Ligustrum obtusifolium*

Chinese wisteria *Wisteria sinensis*

Japanese wisteria *Wisteria floribunda*

Floribunda x Sinensis hybrids *Wisteria x formosa*

Scotch broom *Cytisus scoparius*

Heavenly bamboo *Nandina domestica*

Golden bamboo *Phyllostachys aurea*

Yellow groove bamboo *Phyllostachys aureosulcata*

Callery pear *Pyrus calleryana*

Bee bee tree *Tetradium daniellii*

For further details, see the following webpages from the Maryland Department of Agriculture: [Maryland Invasive Plants Prevention and Control](#) and [MD invasive plant species list](#)