

What is a Native Plant?



Native plants are often described as 'indigenous,' meaning plants that originated in, and occur naturally in, a certain area or region. Ecologically, native plants are components of native eco-systems. They are involved in inter-relationships with other plants, animals. The soil and water. The relationships within native ecosystems have a balance that is the result of hundreds or thousands of years of interaction. Strictly speaking, the word 'indigenous' does not entirely describe plants in New England because of the glaciers in the past that killed all plant life. Most plants in New England today originated outside of New England and were brought in by wind, water, wild or domestic animals, or people.

For new England, a working definition of 'native' is: A plant that was present before European Colonization, which marks the beginning of great environmental changes. After European settlers arrived, many plants were rapidly introduced from other continents. European-style farming and commerce, as well as the subsequent Industrial Revolution, caused widespread and dramatic changes in plant composition compared to the time period before European Colonization.

Naturalized plants are non-native species that have been introduced and then are able to reproduce naturally (without human help) and spread. When naturalized plants grow too enthusiastically to the point of becoming disruptive of native ecosystems, they are considered invasive.

Source: *Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Resources on-line

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

<http://invasives.eeb.uconn.edu/ipane>

New England Wild Flower Society

<http://www.newfs.org>

Natural Resources Conservation Service

<http://www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov/plants.html>

Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/>

The Nature Conservancy

<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/index.html>

THIS IS WHERE
MAP WILL GO



Mercy Center
at Madison

Mercy Center
167 Neck Road
P.O. Box 191
Madison, CT 06443

Phone: 203.245.0401
Fax: 203.245.8718
www.mercybythesea.org

Mercy Center

Invasive Plant Walk



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

**167 Neck Road
Madison, CT**



Mercy Center
at Madison



Invasive Plants are an environmental problem in CT

Invasive plants are non-native plants with origins outside our area, from the continents of Europe and Asia or in some cases from other regions in the U.S. Invasive plants are a problem because they establish easily and grow aggressively where they are not wanted, disperse over wide areas, displace native species, and reduce biological diversity. These unwanted plants invade not only terrestrial habitats but water bodies as well, where they can grow and proliferate undetected for many years. Some invasive plants are more newsworthy because of their beauty (purple loosestrife), their poisonous traits (giant hogweed), or homeowner frustration trying to control them (Oriental bittersweet).

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Source: Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group

Invasive Plants

1 **Burning Bush or Winged Euonymus** *Euonymus alatus*

A shrub occurring in all regions of the state and capable of germinating prolifically in many different habitats. It grows in full sun to full shade. Escaping from cultivation and can form dense thickets and dominate the understory; seeds are dispersed by birds.

2 **Common reed** *Phragmites australis*

A perennial grass found in all regions of the state. Grows in upland and wetland habitats in full sun to full shade. Overwhelms wetlands forming huge, dense stands; flourishes in disturbed areas; native and introduced strains.

3 **Rugosa rose** *Rosa Rugosa*

A shrub that grows in full sun. This is a widely planted urban & coastal plant. **WHY INVASIVE IN CT?**

4 **Japanese honeysuckle** *Lonicera japonica*

A perennial vine occurring in all regions of the state in upland, wetland and coastal habitats. Rapidly growing, dense stands climb and overwhelm native vegetation; produces many seeds that are bird dispersed.

5 **Oriental bittersweet** *Celastrus orbiculatus*

A perennial vine occurring in all regions of the state in uplands. Grows in full sun to partial shade. Escaping from cultivation; berries spread by birds and humans; overwhelms and kills vegetation, including trees.

6 **Multiflora rose** *Rosa multiflora*

A perennial vine or shrub occurring in all regions of the state in upland, wetland and coastal habitats. Forms impenetrable thorny thickets that can overwhelm other vegetation; bird dispersed.

7 **Autumn olive** *Elaeagnus umbellata* Thunb.

A shrub occurring in uplands in all regions of the state. Grows in full sun. Escaping from cultivation; berries spread by birds; aggressive in open areas; has the ability to change soil.

8 **Garlic mustard** *Alliaria petiolata* Bieb.

A biennial herb occurring in all regions of the state in uplands. Grows in full sun to full shade. Spreads aggressively by seed, especially in wooded areas.

9 **Burning Bush** *Euonymus alatus*

See #1 description.

10 **Japanese barberry** *Berberis thunbergii*

A shrub occurring in all regions of the state in open and wooded uplands and wetlands. Grows in full sun to full shade. Escaping from cultivation; spread by birds; forms dense stands.

11 **Japanese knotweed** *Polygonum cuspidatum*

A perennial herbaceous subshrub or shrub occurring in all regions of the state in upland, wetland, and coastal habitats. Spreads vegetatively and by seed; forms dense thickets.

12 **Norway maple** *Acer Platanoides* L.

A tree occurring in all regions of the state in upland and wetland habitats. It grows in full sun to full shade. Escapes from cultivation; can form dense stands; out competes native vegetation including sugar maple; dispersed by water, wind and vehicles.

