

Suggested Alternatives for Invasive Garden Plants

PlantRight's 2015 list of horticultural invasive plants identifies the 10 highest priority invasive plants available for sale in California. If one of these ten plants (in red) is invasive in your climate zone, consider the beautiful, non-invasive alternatives below that can fill the same role in your garden or landscape.

Thank you for joining us to protect California's environment by Planting Right!

✓ = non-invasive ⚡ = drought tolerant 🌻 = California native plant



	Invasive Photos	Suggested Alternatives	Featured Information	Climate Zones
GRASSES		Invasive Plant: Green Fountain Grass (<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>)		[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ Oriental fountaingrass (<i>Pennisetum orientale</i>)	Compact, floriferous, cold hardy, very similar aesthetic and habit, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ <i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> 'Rubrum', 'Skyrocket', 'Fireworks' & 'Fairy Tails'	Sterile cultivars, very similar aesthetic and habit, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ Purple fountaingrass (<i>Pennisetum macrostachyum</i> 'Rubrum')	Sterile cultivar with stunning burgundy leaves, trim in winter for bright red new foliage	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ 🌻 ⚡ California fescue (<i>Festuca californica</i>)	Native, drought and shade tolerant grass, needs good drainage, tolerates mowing	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
	✓ ⚡ Pink Muhly (<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> 'Regal Mist')	Fluffy pink cloud-like blooms, frost tolerant, needs drainage, good en masse	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
		Invasive Plant: Mexican Feathergrass (<i>Nassella / Stipa tenuissima</i>)		[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ 🌻 Blue grama grass (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> 'Blonde Ambition')	Attractive flowerheads, native, best when cut back in winter	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ 🌻 Alkali sacaton (<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>)	Robust yet slower growing, native, does well in a range of soils, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ Mexican deer grass (<i>Muhlenbergia dubia</i>)	Semi-evergreen mounder, likes well-drained soils, good en masse, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ White awn muhly (<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> 'White Cloud')	Fluffy white cloud-like flower heads, easy care, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
	✓ ⚡ Autumn moor grass (<i>Sesleria autumnalis</i>)	Neat clumper, good en masse, drought tolerant, tough	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
		Invasive Plant: Pampas Grass (<i>Cortaderia selloana</i>)		[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ ⚡ Foerster's reed grass (<i>Calamagrostis x acutiflora</i> 'Karl Foerster')	Stately white plumes from summer until frost, drought tolerant, durable and showy	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ 🌻 ⚡ Deer grass (<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>)	Native, drought tolerant, smaller form with simple, clean plumes, easy to grow	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
✓ ⚡ <i>Lomandra hystrix</i> 'Katie Belles' and 'Tropicbelle'		Tidy, tough, drought tolerant, 4 ft. with low spring/summer flowers, not for salty soils	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
✓ ⚡ Giant sacaton grass (<i>Sporobolus wrightii</i>)		Graceful plumes to 7 ft., 3-4 ft. foliage, tough, evergreen, drought tolerant	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
✓ ⚡ Lindheimer's muhly grass (<i>Muhlenbergia lindheimeri</i>)	Deciduous 4 ft. foliage, 6 ft. with plumes, drought tolerant but appreciates extra water	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]		
WATER PLANTS		Invasive Plant: Water Hyacinth (<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>)		[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ King of Siam water lily (<i>Nymphaea</i> 'King of Siam')	Large, double purple flowers, floating leaves, roots in bottom soil	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
		✓ Pickerel weed (<i>Pontederia cordata</i>)	Similar flowers, not free-floating, good in ponds, winter dormant, spreads vegetatively	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
	✓ Cape pondweed (<i>Aponogeton distachyos</i>)	Bright fragrant flowers, foliage floats on water, dormant in winter	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
		Invasive Plant: Yellow Water Iris (<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>)		[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]
✓ Canna species (<i>Canna</i> hybrids)		Many colors and sizes available, robust in ponds, needs to be wintered indoors	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]	
✓ Japanese iris (<i>Iris ensata</i> and cultivars)	Best on pond margins, not to be submerged, showy flowers	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]		
✓ Laevigata iris (<i>Iris laevigata</i> and cultivars)	Grows in shallow water, available flower colors are purple, red or white; poisonous	[Blue] [Purple] [Yellow] [Green] [Red]		

(2015: v1)

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Got feedback? Contact us at PlantRight@suscon.org

Why this matters:

When invasive plants spread into natural areas, they push out existing plants and wildlife. This not only impacts waterways and increases fire severity, but it creates financial burden on taxpayers. In California, over \$80 million and countless hours of painstaking labor is spent each year addressing invasive plants. This does not include financial losses from reduced agricultural yields, land values, and recreational opportunities. By Planting Right, you are protecting our natural resources, local ecosystems and our economy.



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	Invasive Photos	Suggested Alternatives	Featured Information	Climate Zones
GROUNDCOVERS		Invasive Plant: Highway Iceplant (<i>Carpobrotus edulis</i>)		
		✓ Trailing iceplant (<i>Delosperma cooperi</i>)	Showy pink flowers, low maintenance, cold-hardy	
		✓ 🌻 Wild strawberry (<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i> , <i>F. californica</i>)	Native, edible, best in sandy or well-drained soil, tolerates drought or moderate water	
		✓ ⚡ White trailing iceplant (<i>Delosperma</i> 'Alba')	White flowers, attracts bee pollinators, small-leaved, drought-tolerant	
		✓ Rosea iceplant (<i>Drosanthemum floribundum</i>)	Good for erosion control, tough, moderate to minimal water, can be weedy on coast	
		✓ ⚡ 🌻 Prostrate coyote bush (<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>)	Easy care, native, habitat plant, drought tolerant on coast, reliably deer-proof	
		✓ Prostrate grevillea (<i>Grevillea x gaudichaudii</i>)	Colorful, easy-care, best in part shade, spreads to 15 ft. wide, moderate water	
GROUNDCOVERS		Invasive Plant: Big Leaf Periwinkle (<i>Vinca major</i>)		
		✓ Dwarf periwinkle (<i>Vinca minor</i>)	Nice in containers or groundcover in a wide range of soils, long-blooming, blue flowers	
		✓ Hardy geranium (<i>Geranium</i> 'Rozanne')	Reliable spring to early summer blooms, medium water, hardy, 2 ft. tall x 3 ft. wide	
		✓ Serbian bellflower (<i>Campanula poscharskyana</i>)	Similar flowers in spring to early summer, low water, fast growth, 8" tall, spreading	
		✓ Star / Asian jasmine (<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i> / <i>asiaticum</i>)	Fragrant and abundant flowers, shrub-like, grows as mat or on trellises, 2 ft. x 10 ft.	
		✓ 🌻 <i>Ceanothus</i> groundcovers	Blue flowers, low water, slower growing, native, many varieties; ask for local options	
		✓ 🌻 Hummingbird sage (<i>Salvia spathacea</i>)	Habitat plant, showy flowers and foliage, prefers light shade and medium water	
✓ Taiwan raspberry (<i>Rubus pentalobus</i>)	Dense, mild autumn color, creeps over rocks, tough groundcover, slower growing			
SHRUBS		Invasive Plants: French Broom (<i>Genista monspessulana</i>); Scotch Broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>)		
		✓ Yellow bush daisy (<i>Euryops pectinatus</i>)	Year-round yellow blooms, moderate water, easy care, sensitive to frost, smaller	
		✓ ⚡ 🌻 CA flannel bush (<i>Fremontodendron californicum</i>)	Yellow blooms late-spring to fall, drought tolerant, use dwarf cultivars: 'Ken Taylor' & 'Dara's Gold'	
		✓ Forsythia (<i>Forsythia x intermedia</i>)	Early spring yellow blooms, moderate water, prefers cooler Northern CA climates	
		✓ Knife leaf acacia (<i>Acacia cultriformis</i>)	Yellow fragrant blooms in early spring, minimal water, 10-15 ft. tall and wide	
		✓ Rose cultivars ('Golden Showers', 'Golden Celebration', 'Carpet Yellow')	Large sprays of yellow flowers, typically spring to fall; disease resistant foliage	
TREES		Invasive Plant: Chinese Tallow Tree (<i>Triadica sebifera</i>)		
		✓ Maidenhair tree (<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>)	Golden autumn leaves, suitable for all regions, full sun, 35-50 ft. tall	
		✓ American sweet gum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>)	Autumn color, good as screen, fruits are spiny balls, grows to 60 ft.	
		✓ Red maple (<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'October Glory')	Autumn color, fast growing, not for urban use, 60 ft. tall x 40 ft. wide, needs water	

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PlantRight has 'retired' plants from its list because they are now only rarely found in California's nursery trade. These retired plants (below) are still invasive, and should not be used in gardens or landscaping. For information on where these plants are invasive and for noninvasive alternatives, visit www.PlantRight.org.

- Capeweed (*Arctotheca calendula*)
- Giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
- Jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*)
- Striated broom (*Cytisus striatus*)
- Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*)
- Blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*)
- Crystalline iceplant (*Mesembryanthemum crystallinum*)
- Myoporum tree (*Myoporum laetum*)
- Bridal veil broom (*Retama monosperma*)
- Scarlet Wisteria (*Sesbania punicea*)
- Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*)
- Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*)