



PERIWINKLE



PACHYSANDRA



LOWBUSH BLUEBERRY



WINTERGREEN

GROUNDCOVERS: KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AND FOES

Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Still found in nurseries, this groundcover remains a popular choice. Unfortunately, it is not as innocent as it looks. The aggressive plant can easily escape from your yard to a nearby forest and quickly take over the forest floor.

Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*)

Another common groundcover—and another hazard to the natural world. Has been found growing in a few reservations on its own. Even though it is less aggressive in our climate than periwinkle, this is still an alien plant that does not add, but only subtracts from the environment.

INSTEAD OF THESE ALIENS, consider the following lovely native plants for your groundcover:

Lowbush blueberries (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)

This easy going plant will thrive in a sunny, open location with poor, sandy, or rocky soil. Blueberries can be found in nurseries, including a few horticultural varieties. You will have a nice, natural groundcover and besides enjoy an annual crop of juicy blueberries!

Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)

If you prefer an evergreen groundcover, choose wintergreen. In addition to glossy foliage all year round, your garden will be adorned by bright red fruit all the way through the winter. They will stand out against snow, sometimes even lasting into the next spring!

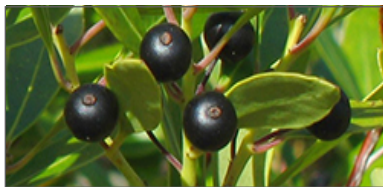
MAKE INFORMED CHOICES AT THE NURSERY

Instead of planting non-native rhododendrons, choose mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). Each of



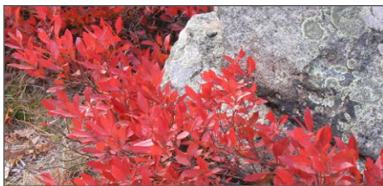
many delightful varieties has evergreen foliage and flowers in June.

Get rid of those privet hedges. Consider planting inkberry holly (*Ilex glabra*). It is evergreen, grows in sandy soil and takes pruning well. If you would like your plants to produce berries for birds, then



you will need to plant both female and male shrubs (one male for five female).

Remove those invasive burning bushes! Instead use huckleberries (*Gaylussacia baccata*). This small or medium-sized native shrub produces stunning



autumn color. In addition, you (and local birds) will munch on the berries.

Instead of barberries, try winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*). Its piercing red berries will brighten your life during those cold and dark days, from November right through February. They also can provide food for birds. Keep in mind, for berries



you will have to have both sexes (one male shrub for about every five females).

LOOKING FOR NATIVE TREES that work well in home gardens? Try flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and American holly (*Ilex opaca*).

INVASIVE PLANTS

WHY THEY MUST GO



Sheep's-Bit

Aka *Jasione montana* looks pretty! However, this alien annual is rapidly invading southeastern Massachusetts—including the unique pine barrens in and around Myles Standish State Forest. Together we can prevent sheep's-bit and others like it from ruining the globally rare pine barrens. Learn more about identifying, controlling, and replacing invasive plants in your own yard. Let's keep our pine barrens intact!



Friends of Myles Standish
State Forest
www.friendsmssf.com

Photos courtesy of Salicicola.com

What is an invasive plant?

WHILE MODEST AND HARMLESS in their native environment, some plants may become unpredictable and aggressive when introduced to a faraway country, finding themselves in a new setting away from their natural competitors and consumers. Escaping from gardens and front lawns, they first spread to open spaces along roads, abandoned fields, and other altered habitats. While some remain there, those most vigorous advance even farther—right into natural habitats. Those alien plants that find their way into forests, rivers, and ponds where they displace native plants are considered invasive.



Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) produces leafy rosettes during the first year. The next year: little bluestem and golden asters are forced aside by the invasive newcomer, whose roots emit chemicals that kill other plants.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

NON-NATIVE PLANT INVASIONS have already contributed to the complete disappearance of many native plants in eastern Massachusetts. One aggressive clone of periwinkle can take the place of wintergreen, wild sarsaparilla, dewberry, Indian pipe, and scores of other natives! Each loss of a native plant can trigger multiple losses of insects, birds, and other dependent organisms. If we remain indifferent about invasive plants advancing on us, the pine barrens we know may eventually be lost to groves of Norway spruce, thickets of Japanese knotweed, ponds circled by reeds, glossy buckthorn, and rusty willow!

HOW CAN I HELP?

CONSTANT VIGILANCE. Start in your own yard. Is there a Japanese honeysuckle climbing on the fence? Or is there a row of barberry bushes displaying bright red fruit in front of your house? The only way to effectively deal with an invasive plant infestation is to remove invasive plants right away. If YOU fail to act on time, the problem plants may spread, ruining the natural landscape as they go.



Common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*) and Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) are invasive shrubs. Both are now banned from all sales and propagation, though they can still often be found in yards. Remove!

AVOID USING ALIEN PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN!

Beware. Many non-native plants are rather aggressive, even though they are not yet labeled “invasive”. Research each plant before you buy it. Ask your local nursery what native plants they can offer. For more information visit Mass Wildlife’s Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (Google “mass wildlife invasive plants”).

COMMON INVASIVE PLANTS IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

GLOSSY BUCKTHORN

Birds feed on shiny black berries of this highly invasive shrub and thus disperse its seeds. Especially harmful in wetlands, it has found its way to MSSF pond shores.



GARLIC MUSTARD

One of the most notorious intruders in the New World, garlic mustard produces chemicals that hamper growth of other plants.



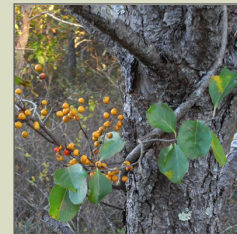
JAPANESE KNOTWEED

A well-known urban invader, this aggressive plant makes it from the roadside to conservation land, once it finds a foothold in a disturbed habitat.



ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET

The dangerous vine acts like a boa constrictor winding its way up tree trunks, suffocating trees. It has been recently spotted in MSSF.



RUSTY WILLOW

The alien willow has become the most common willow in SE Massachusetts, displacing native plants in wetlands and around ponds. Find out more about it at salicicola.com/announcements/atrocinerea/.

