

COMMON INVASIVES AND BEAUTIFUL NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

Invasive: Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)

Introduced to the US in 1876, Japanese barberry was grown and planted widely throughout the Northeast. Due to its dark red leaves, it is often deemed preferable to--though often confused with--the native variety, *Berberis canadensis*, and its European, or common cousin, *Berberis vulgaris*. A dense, deciduous, spiny shrub that grows 2' to 8' in size, with pale yellow flowers and bright red berries, it has been used as an ornamental or as a hedge. Japanese Barberry has been found to harbor high populations of the deer tick responsible for Lyme Disease. Control of this invasive is through either manual removal, torching or chemical means.



Replacement Alternatives:

Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

This is a deciduous holly that is native to eastern North America where it typically occurs in swamps, damp thickets, low woods and along ponds and streams. A slow-growing, deciduous shrub with an upright-rounded habit, it typically grows 3'-12' tall. In the wild, it often suckers to form large thickets or colonies. If there are several female plants and at least one male, flowers produce bright red berries in late summer to fall which are showy and will persist throughout the winter (hence the common name). Berries provide interest to the winter landscape and winter feed for birds.



High Bush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)

Fun and easy to grow, provides delicious blueberries for family and wildlife; striking fall color.

Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*)

Stunning bright red fall color; berries provide birds and other wildlife with vital nutrition.

Invasive: Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica* or *ynonym: Polygonum cuspidatum*)

Japanese knotweed, native to eastern Asia, was introduced in the late 1800s in the United States as an ornamental and was used for erosion control along roadways and embankments that escaped cultivation. A shrub-like, semi-woody perennial, it is fast growing and has hollow, bamboo-like stems that form dense leafy thickets 6-9 feet tall which become tough and woody with age. The shoots arise from coarse, spreading rhizomes with lengths up to 50'. Plants produce either male or female flowers in white clusters at the upper leaf axils in late August and September. New colonies can form from very small rhizome or root fragments that are moved by natural means such as waterways, as well as by human activities that move soil such as construction. Once established, Japanese knotweed is very persistent. The best control is to not plant knotweed, and to remove existing plants including all rhizomes. Monthly cutting or weekly mowing throughout the growing season may reduce knotweed stands.



Replacement Alternative: Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)

Growing 1-15” in height and 6-15” in width, *Lindera benzoin* wants part sun to shade and prefers moist soil, adapting well to gardens. Its fragrant yellow flowers in early spring are followed by smooth green leaves and smell of cloves and anise when crushed. The luminous yellow fall color attracts migrating birds to the female spicebush, which becomes covered in bright red berries that are an excellent food source for numerous birds. The spicebush is the host plant for Spicebush Swallowtail butterflies. This shrub requires at least one male shrub nearby for the female shrubs to produce fruit.



Invasive: Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)

Japanese stilt grass is an annual that typically grows one to three feet in height. Despite its branching, sprawling, mat-like manner, it resembles a small, delicate bamboo. Leaves are narrow and lance-shaped with a distinctive, pale, silvery stripe of reflective hairs on the upper surface. Flower spikes appear in September. Stilt grass reproduces exclusively by seed and a single plant may produce 100 to 1,000 seeds which remain viable in the seed bank for five or more years, germinating readily. Japanese stilt grass is quite shallow-rooted and can be easily pulled by hand in late summer when the plant are just about to flower, especially when the soil is moist. Pulling is easiest in late summer when plants are mature. Stilt grass can also be mowed or weed-whacked.



Restoration Alternative: seeding with annual rye grass. Annual rye competes with Japanese Stiltgrass and allows natives in the seed bank to propagate.

Replacement Alternatives: Native groundcovers

Native pachysandra (*Pachysandra procumbens*)

Grows in clumps and its stolons are very slow growing, so this plant does not take over the garden; its flowers are large, will often have a pink blush, and they are fragrant; the foliage color transforms into a grey-silver-green mottling in the fall and winter, adding much winter interest. Planted on a semi-shady East or South-facing slope in light soil seems to be its favorite, but also tolerates dense shade, dry soil, and full sun with moisture.

