

Don't Plant a Pest
by Sue McDavid
UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County
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Pests in the garden are not always creepy crawlers; they can be plants too, and some are even very attractive. However, attractive does not always mean good, and you may be surprised to learn that some plants in your landscape should not be present at all. The California Invasive Plant Council, or Cal-IPC, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to protect California's environment and economy from invasive plants. It was established in 1992 to address environmental threats from invasive plants, which it defines as plants not native to an environment and once introduced, establish quickly, reproduce freely, and spread widely. The Cal IPC website, <https://www.cal-ipc.org/>, has a very comprehensive inventory of plants that are already considered to be invasive or are to be watched because of their potential for being invasive.

I think everyone is aware that Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and Yellow Starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) are highly invasive plants, as is Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*); but did you also know that English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Mexican Feather Grass (*Nassella tenuissima*) are on Cal-IPC's list of invasive plants? I frequently see Mexican Feather Grass in various landscapes, but this is an extremely vigorous plant and will spread quickly out of its designated place in a garden by freely reseeding just about everywhere. English Ivy is also still frequently planted, but this vigorous groundcover will grow up walls and trees, ruining building exteriors and choking the life out of trees. It is also a notorious hideout for snakes and rodents. Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*) is another plant to avoid because of its very vigorous growth habit and wind-driven seed dispersal of up to 20 miles from the parent plant.

Another very good resource for learning about invasive plants and noxious weeds can be found at <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74139.html/>

What can an individual do to help decrease invasive plants? First, educate yourself by researching a plant's characteristics before you decide to put it in your garden. There are good alternatives to invasive plants, and some of these can be found at www.plantright.org

Then, share information about invasive plants with family, friends, and neighbors.

Finally, if you see an invasive plant being offered at a nursery or other businesses where plants are sold, politely talk to the personnel who do the buying; they may not be aware that a plant is on the invasive list, and I bet would welcome the information. We can all do some small part to help decrease the number of these invasive plants.

Master Gardener classes are offered monthly throughout the county. You can find our class schedule at: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education_Classes/?calendar=yes&g=56698, and recorded classes on many gardening topics here: http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu/Public_Education/Classes/

Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open through the end of November on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m.- noon. Please check our website for further information about the Sherwood Demonstration Garden and winter tours at:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/Demonstration_Garden/

Have a gardening question? Master Gardeners are working hard to answer your questions. Use the “Ask a Master Gardener” option on our website: mgeldorado.ucanr.edu or leave a message on our office telephone: 530-621-5512. We’ll get back to you! Master Gardeners are also on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest.

For more information on the UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County, see our website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. To sign up for notices and newsletters, see http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news.