



Grow Me Instead profiles are recommended alternatives to Alberta's most unwanted horticultural plants

A Guide for Alberta 2015

Why Eliminate Invasive Plants from your Garden

Some plants from other parts of the globe, originally introduced as garden flowers, for landscapes, or for their medicinal or food value, have jumped the garden fence to become invasive in the natural environment. Invasive plants are spread, intentionally and unintentionally, by people and their activities. They have no natural predators to stop their spread so they survive, thrive, and dominate, in the wild. Accidental or intentional, these invaders cause not only environmental and habitat degradation, but social and economic loss as well. Their growth and rapid spread is detrimental to native plants and damages natural areas, rangelands, parks, watersheds and lakes. They threaten the biodiversity of our native habitat and endanger wildlife.

While only about 10% of introduced ornamental plants actually become invasive, effective action needs to be taken to avoid planting the ones that do. Choosing suitable alternatives can help prevent future spread and serve to protect and preserve Alberta's natural environment.

Against the Law

It is against the law to grow any of the invasive plants featured. The *Alberta Weed Control Act* was put in place to protect Alberta. Find factsheets on all regulated plants, Noxious and Prohibited Noxious, at www.abinvasives.ca

The introduction and spread of invasive alien species is affecting Canada's environment, economy and society, including human health. The current threats posed by existing and potentially invasive alien species are significant and growing at an alarming rate. It is essential for Canada to address invasive alien species. Canada needs to take measures to protect and conserve natural resources, associated industries, as well as the health of wildlife and humans.

—An Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Canada, September 2004

Guide to PLANT WISE Gardening

- ✔ **Make good choices.** Purchase and grow non-invasive plants. Select the right plant for the right place.
- ✔ **Replace existing invasive plants** in your garden with non-invasive plants
- ✔ **Properly dispose of invasive plants.** Remove invasive plants before they flower to prevent seed spread. Either burn them or bag them for landfill disposal. Never dispose of invasive plants "over the fence" in natural areas or parks. Never compost invasive plants!
- ✔ **Check reliable local sources before you plant.** Do your research. Ask your local garden centre or ask a local horticulture expert. Check out www.abinvasives.ca
- ✔ **Trade only plants and seeds you know are non-invasive.**
- ✔ **Consider native plants.** Use local suppliers only. Check out the Alberta Native Plant Council www.anpc.ab.ca
- ✔ **Avoid collecting pretty "wildflowers"** from roadsides or natural areas. Many are highly aggressive invasive plants. Allow true native plants to thrive in their natural setting.
- ✔ **Avoid pre-packaged wildflower mixes** unless contents are identified and contain only non-invasive species.
- ✔ **Encourage others** to plant non-invasive plants and to replace existing invasive plants.
- ✔ **Use mulches and/or ground covers** in open garden areas to prevent invasive plants from establishing
- ✔ **Report location** of invasive plants to local weed inspector.

This guide shows you what plants to avoid and examples of good, non-invasive alternatives to consider for your Alberta garden. Choose the right plant for the right place.

This booklet references the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Hardiness Zone System, and reflects knowledge and experience of the Alberta nursery industry.

LEGEND

| | | | |
|--|---------------|--|------------------|
| | FULL SUN | | DROUGHT TOLERANT |
| | PARTIAL SHADE | | LOW WATER |
| | PARTIAL SHADE | | MODERATE WATER |
| | PARTIAL SHADE | | REGULAR WATER |
| | FULL SHADE | | HIGH WATER |

INVASIVE - AVOID USE

DAME'S ROCKET
Hesperis matronalis

Often confused with garden phlox (5 petals; opposite leaves), Dame's rocket (4 petals; alternate leaves) is a prolific seed producer. Flowers are magenta to pink or white. Found in "wildflower" mixes. Especially problematic near woodlands.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

David's Lavender Garden Phlox
Phlox paniculata 'David's Lavender'

Stunning lavender-pink blossoms on tall stocks. Fragrant. Blooms mid to late summer. Highly mildew resistant. Deer resistant. Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies. Other varieties such as 'Flame Blue' also available. Zone: 3



Ht. 106 cm; W. 38-45 cm

Purple Smoke Baptisia
Baptisia australis 'Purple Smoke'

Hybrid. Tall, bushy mound of grey-green foliage. Long spikes of smoky violet-blue and purple flowers on black stems. Good substitute for Lupines. Excellent cut-flower. Attracts butterflies. Zone: 3



Ht. 90-120 cm; W. 60-90 cm

Southcombe Double Cranesbill
Geranium oxonianum 'Southcombe Double'

Unusual double flowers with layers of bright pink petals. Blooms from June to August. A true geranium. Versatile and nearly carefree. Compact plants excellent for edging and borders. Zone: 4



Ht. 30-40 cm; W. 30-60 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Autumn Joy Sedum (*Sedum* x 'Autumn Joy'), Zone 2.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE
(AKA LYTHRUM 'MORDEN PINK', 'MORDEN GLEAM')
Lythrum salicaria

Referred to as "the beautiful killer". Tall strong purple spires. Takes over ponds, beaches, marshes, farm dugouts, irrigation canals. A mature plant can produce 2.5 million seeds. Ornamental cultivars are very fertile when cross pollinated. Copious pollen sources for wild plants.




AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Tall Larkspur
Delphinium glaucum

Alberta native. Rising from a woody rootstock, this stout, tall perennial has deeply cut leaves, and both stem and leaves have a grayish, waxy covering. Spikes of deep blue to purple flowers up to 30 cm tall. Zone: 3



Ht. 90-180 cm; W. 45-60 cm

Floristan Violet / Blazing Star (aka Gayfeather)
Liatis spicata 'Floristan Violet'


Selected from a native prairie wildflower. Tall spikes, bright magenta-purple flowers. Blossoms in midsummer. Useful in sunny border, meadow gardens, or containers. Commercial cut flower. Attractive to butterflies. Zone: 3



Ht. 75-95 cm; W. 35-45 cm

Karl Foerster Feather Reed Grass
Calamagrostis acutifolia 'Karl Foerster'

2001 Perennial of the Year. Strong upright feature. Tall spikes, soft greenish flowers, turning rose, then straw-coloured. Welcome winter accent. Zone: 3



Foliage Ht. 90-120 cm; Flower Ht. 150-200 cm; W. 60-90 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Spike Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*), Zone 3; Blood-red Iris (*Iris sanguinea*), Zone 4; and Wilson's Ligularia (*Ligularia wilsoniana*), Zone 2.

HIMALAYAN BALSAM
(AKA HIMALAYAN ORCHID, POLICEMAN'S HELMET)
Impatiens glandulifera

Fast growing annual. Impressive size, rapidly out-competes plants in riparian areas and along shorelines. Orchid shaped flower resembles a British policeman's helmet. Seed capsules explode, catapulting seeds 6 metres. Shallow roots make it easily controlled by hand-pulling.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Smooth Blue Beard-Tongue; Shining Penstemon
Penstemon nitidus


Alberta native. A beautiful small species with very gray, glaucous foliage and spikes of beautiful sky-blue flowers in May and June. Zone: 3



Ht. 20-30 cm; W. 15-25 cm

Gas Plant
Dictamnus albus var. *purpureus*

Long-lived, unique perennial. Lemon scented, glossy green leaves. Bushy, upright clumps. Spikes of spidery-looking mauve-pink flowers. Flowers early summer. Worthwhile for cutting. Attracts butterflies. Zone: 2



Ht. 60-90 cm; W. 45-60 cm

Cardinal Flower
Lobelia cardinalis

An eastern North American native herbaceous perennial that grows well in wet or even boggy soils. Flowers are brilliant vermilion red, produced through summer into fall on flowering stalks a metre in height. Cultivars with green or bronze-purple leaves and white or pink flowers are available. Zone: 2



Ht. 60-120 cm; W. 30-60 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Blue Boy Garden Phlox (*Phlox paniculata* 'Blue Boy'), Zone 3; Blue columbine (*Aquilegia brevistyla*) Alberta native, Zone 3; Candale larkspur (*Delphinium elatum*), Zone 2; and Pink turtle (*Chelone lyonii*, *C. oblique*), Zone 3.

COMMON BABY'S BREATH
Gypsophila paniculata

Ornamental perennial used in floral arrangements. In winter, stems break off, blowing around in the wind, like tumbleweeds, spreading seed to pastures and natural areas. Widespread infestations across Canada and northern United States.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

German Statice
Goniolimon tataricum

Prickly heads of tiny white flowers. Low rosettes of leathery green leaves. Branching heads of flowers bloom July – August. For rock gardens, xeriscaping, edging or containers. Excellent as fresh or dried flowers. Popular for wreaths. Attracts butterflies. CAUTION: All plant parts poisonous if eaten. Zone: 3



Ht. 25-40 cm; W. 30-45 cm

Yarrow
Achillea millefolium


Alberta native. Herbaceous perennial with broad, flattened heads of flowers and feathery leaves. Commercial cultivars with varying flower colours are available. Zone: 3



Ht. 60-90 cm; W. 60-90 cm

Russian Sage
Perovskia atriplicifolia

Upright bush. Fragrant, grey-green foliage. Lavender blue blossoms. Flowers July to October. Good for cut flowers/dry arrangements. Attracts butterflies. Zone: 4



Ht. 80-100 cm; W. 60-90 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Hewitt's Double Meadow Rue (*Thalictrum delavayi* 'Hewitt's Double'), Zone 3; White Meadowsweet spirea (*Spiraea betuifolia*), an Alberta native, Zone 3; Sea lavender (*Limonium latifolium*), Zone 3; and Pussytoes (Roses: *Antennaria rosea*, and Showy Everlasting: *A. pulcherrima*), an Alberta native, Zone 3.

Acknowledgements

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INVASIVE - AVOID USE

YELLOW CLEMATIS
(*Clematis tangutica*)

Spreading vine. Yellow, pendant flowers. Seeds have silky, long tufts easily carried on wind and water. Aggressive plant once established. Urban and natural area infestations are becoming more common displacing native flora and increasing fire hazard. Also moving into mountain Parks.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Honeybelle Honeysuckle
Lonicera x brownii

Deep golden coloured flowers. Compact twining vine. Clean, round medium-green foliage. Blossoms throughout season. Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Zone: 4



Ht. 3-6 m; W. 3-6 m

Dropmore Scarlet Trumpet Honeysuckle
Lonicera x brownii 'Scarlet Trumpet'

Fast growing twining vine with waxy green leaves and showy orange to scarlet trumpet-shaped flowers. Blooms throughout the summer. Prefers full sun, but will grow and flower with partial shade. Developed in Manitoba for Canadian prairie conditions. Zone: 4



Ht. 3-4 m

Western White Clematis (aka Old Man's Beard)
Clematis ligusticifolia var. *ligusticifolia*

Alberta native. Lovely white flowers with yellow centers. Blooms June/July. Decorative "Old Man's Beard" seed head. Twining climber. Zone: 3



Spreads up to 20 m

ALSO CONSIDER: Golden Hops Vine (*Humulus lupulus* 'Aureus'), Zone 3; and Persian Yellow Rose (*Rosa foetida periana*), Zone 4.

FLOWERING RUSH
(AKA GRASSY RUSH, WATER GLADIOLUS)
(*Butomus umbellatus*)

Cattail-like perennial found in lakes, ponds and irrigation canals. Introduced as an ornamental in water gardens. Leaves are triangular in cross section and often confused with sedges. Pink flowers borne in umbrella shaped clusters. Reproduces by seed and rhizomatous roots.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Northern Iris (aka Arctic Iris, Beachead Iris)
Iris setosa


Perennial spreading from thick rhizomes. Flowers are pale to dark purple; includes a white form ('Alba'). Grow in the front of a border, sunny edge of a woodland garden, or a bog garden; miniatures are suitable for the rock garden. Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit. Zone: 3



Ht. 15-50 cm; W. spreads

Water Sedge, Awned Sedge
Carex aquatilis, *C. atherodes*

Alberta native sedges. Adapted to wet soils. Tufted, grass-like perennials with linear leaves that are shorter than stems; Water Sedge is leafier and often they have a bluish white cast. Both have flower clusters in erect, cylindrical spikes. Zone: 2



Ht. 20-120 cm; W. 20-30 cm

Small-flowered Bulrush (aka Small-fruited Bulrush)
Scirpus microcarpus

One of a few native bulrushes found in marshes, stream banks, ponds, and wet ditches. Suitable for garden ponds and wetland margins. Has basal, strap-like leaves; stiff, upright stems; and, flower clusters with radiating branches. Zone: 2



Ht. 30-100 cm; W. 100 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Water plantain (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), Zone 3; Narrow-leaved cotton grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Zone 3.

PALE YELLOW IRIS
(AKA YELLOW FLAG IRIS, WATER FLAG, YELLOW IRIS)
(*Iris pseudacorus*)

Perennial plant introduced as a pond ornamental. Pale yellow flowers. Has tuberous roots and reproduces by seed and fast-moving rhizomes. Forms dense thickets which increase sedimentation and completely changes the habitat.




AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Butter and Sugar Iris
Iris siberica 'Butter and Sugar'

Siberica-type iris that is easy to grow, and trouble-free. This plant forms clumps of grassy foliage with late spring display of bicolored flowers of buttery-yellow and white, and repeat blooms. Excellent at the waterside, or in a moist border. Also suitable for using in tubs and mixed containers. Zone: 3



Ht. 60-80 cm; W. 50 cm

Japanese Iris
Iris ensata

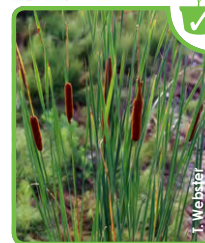
Tall plant that bears 3 or 4 purple or red-purple blooms 6-12 inches across, on single stems. Prominently ribbed leaves are 24 to 36 inches long. Low maintenance, requiring only feeding and division every few years. Ideal for ponds, streams, or boggy areas. In beds, they require a few extra waterings in a season. Zone: 3



Ht. 50-100 cm; W. 100 cm

Common Cattail
Typha latifolia

Alberta native. A stout-stemmed perennial often found in dense clumps. Broad linear leaf blades. The dense, brown, cylindrical flowering spike persists through autumn before becoming a downy mass of white. By its creeping rootstocks, this typical marsh plant forms dense stands in shallow water. Zone: 3



Ht. 120-180 cm; W. 120-180 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Bearded Iris yellow cultivars (*Iris germanica*), Zone 3; and Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Alberta native, Zone 2.

BIGHEAD KNAPWEED
(AKA ARMENIAN BASKETFLOWER, GLOBE CENTAUREA, GOLDEN THISTLE, YELLOW/LEMON FLUFF KNAPWEED, YELLOW HARDHEAD)
(*Centaurea macrocephala*)

Long-lived perennial out-competes native vegetation. Reproduces by seed. Yellow florets on a large flower base or "big head". Very difficult to remove once established. Brought in as a garden ornamental.




AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Tall Coneflower
Rudbeckia laciniata

Features daisy-like flowers (to 3.5" across) with drooping, yellow petals and dome-like, green center disks. Long mid to late summer bloom period. Remove spent blooms to encourage a fall rebloom. Divide clumps to control growth. The young leaves are excellent raw in salads. Zone: 3



Ht. 90-120 cm; W. 50-90 cm

Globeflower 'Golden Queen' or 'Orange Queen'
Trollius chinensis

An extremely popular perennial that bursts into colour in late spring and early summer and has contrasting deep green leaves. Easy care, it grows well in a sunny or part-shaded border, also at the edge of moist woodland. Flowers will last a few days when cut. Zone: 3



Ht. 75-90 cm; W. 45-60 cm

Prairie Coneflower aka Mexican Hat
Ratibida columnifera

This perennial is a valuable addition to dry sunny borders, being drought tolerant and suitable for xeriscaping. The flowers resemble small hats, with yellow reflexed ray petals and large greenish-brown columnar centers. Attracts bees, butterflies and birds. Flowers good for cutting. Zone: 3




Ht. 60-90 cm; W. 40-50 cm

ALSO CONSIDER: Hardy Lily Species such as Daurian (*Lilium dauricum* (L. *pensylvanicum*)), Zone 3; and Lemon Daylily (*Hemerocallis flava* (H. *liliospatholus*)), Zone 3.

SALT CEDAR
(AKA 'SUMMER GLOW', 'PINK CASCADE', TAMARISK)
(*Tamarix* spp.)

Deciduous shrub/small tree that grows 3-4 metres along creeks, rivers, ponds. Scale-like leaves concentrate salt from ground water in soil—makes it unsuitable for native plants/shrubs. Deep rooted and consumes 750 litres of water/day. Produces 600,000 seeds annually.



AVOID

NATIVE & ORNAMENTAL ALTERNATIVES

Joe Pye Weed "Purple Bush"
Eupatorium maculatum 'Purple Bush'


Outstanding dusty-pink flower display. Blooms August-October. Durable, large herbaceous perennial. Attracts butterflies. (Note: Spotted Joe Pye Weed, *E. maculatum*, is native to Alberta, with pink flowers and medicinal properties.) Zone: 3



Ht. 210 cm; W. 150 cm

Queen of the Prairies
Filipendula rubra 'Venustra'

Bold accent plant. Coarsely divided green leaves. Forms mounds with large panicles of bright pink flowers. Sturdy upright stems. Zone: 2



Ht. 120-180 cm; W. 60-90 cm

Lilacs
Syringa spp.

Classic fragrance. Local nurseries carry varieties for cold climates. Blooms vary from early spring to mid-summer. Adapted to many soil types/climates. Variety of uses, from low urban hedges, e.g. Dwarf Korean Lilac (*S. meyeri* 'Palibin'), to large shrubs for screening, e.g. Donald Wyman Lilac (*S. x hyacinthiflora* 'Donald Wyman'). Zone: 3




Ht. 1.5-4 m; W. 1.5-3 m

ALSO CONSIDER: Wichita Blue Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* 'Wichita Blue'), Zone 3; Tolleson's Blue Weeping Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* 'Tolleson's Blue Weeping'), Zone 3; and Prickly Wildrose (*Rosa acicularis*), Zone 2.

WILDFLOWER MIXES
(Pre-packaged)


Many "Wildflower" mixes contain seeds of non-native plant species legislated as invasive. Contents are rarely listed accurately by scientific names. The wide variety of common names used for some plants adds to the confusion. Never purchase a seed mix without the packet being clearly labeled with scientific names.



AVOID

INSTEAD, TRY...

Plant individual packets of your favourite flowers. It is far LESS work than battling unwanted invasive plants for years.



Make your own "wildflower" mix
Purchase packets of your favourite flowers, in the colours and sizes right for your garden, mix them and plant your own "wildflower" garden.

Consider local native plants
Research the native plant growers/suppliers within your local area. Choose one of the most reputable local sources for seed to ensure species planted are actually native to, and adapted for, a specific area.

Caution: Regional mixes (those listed for certain general areas e.g. Prairie mixes) don't necessarily contain native seed.

See also: Alberta Native Plant Council's Guidelines for Purchase and Use of Wildflower Seed Mixes: www.anpc.ab.ca



Photo: Alan White, University of Alberta