

Overview of California's Invasive Plants Problem

- **Invasive species are a top threat in California wildlands.**
 - Invasive species are second only to habitat loss in threatening biodiversity and are expensive for public parks and agencies to remove.
 - In California, \$85 million in taxpayer funds go to fighting invasive plants and animals every year.
Source: Invasive Species: Federal and Selected State Funding to Address Harmful, Nonnative Species. United States General Accounting Office, Report to Congressional Committees. August, 2000.
 - Nationally, invasives plants cost more than \$35 billion per year in eradication work and economic losses.
Source: Pimentel, D., R. Zuniga & D. Morrison. 2005. Update on the environmental and economic costs associated with alien-invasive species in the United States. Ecological Economics 52: 273-288.
 - Public parks and agencies efforts to remove and control invasive plants drains time and money away from their core mission.
 - The term “invasive species” refers to plants, animals and insects. PlantRight is focusing on plants, and specifically, the 50% of invasive plants that come from gardens and landscaping.
- **Very few nursery plants are invasive. But the few that do invade wildlands account for 50% of all plant invasions. This means our garden plant choices matter.**
 - Half of invasive plants got their start in gardens and landscaping – the other half are accidentally introduced by transportation, agriculture, etc.
- **Invasive plants cause major ecological problems.**
 - Most of the plants used in gardens and landscaping do not invade wildlands and harm wildlife. But a few species can – and do – escape from cultivated areas into open landscapes and cause serious ecological problems.
 - Invasive species enter a natural area, home to countless native plants, insects, and animals – and take over. They aggressively crowd out the plants that should be there, and threaten wildlife. In coastal areas, iceplant eliminates shorebird nesting habitat. In the Central Valley, scarlet wisteria poisons wildlife and crowds out animals from streambanks.
 - They change the way whole ecosystems function, often causing flooding and creating hotter, faster wildfires. *Arundo donax*, for example, is highly flammable – and by growing thickly along waterways, the plants form a burning bridge for wildfires that were previously stopped by streams and rivers. Eucalyptus trees increase the speed and temperature of fires, often near homes and development.
- **There are plenty of beautiful, safe alternative plants.**
 - There are thousands of beautiful, safe alternatives to these problem plants, so it's easy for gardeners to find plants that meet all their specific needs and make smart choices.
 - Gardeners can find the perfect match for your landscape without sacrificing bright color, good shape or hardiness. For help, they can ask their local nursery professional to suggest non-invasive plants that will flourish in their garden.
- **California's nursery crops contribute significantly to the state's economy.**
 - Valued at approximately \$15 billion annually in production and sales and supporting nearly 200,000 jobs, nursery crops combined with floral crops are the second largest agricultural crop in California.