

**Friday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

It's not really news to anyone: the spread of invasive plants can have dire consequences for the environment, our economy, and even our health. Invasive plants infiltrate our forests, ponds, and gardens; once established they are often difficult or impossible to eliminate. They upset delicate ecological balances that may never be repaired.

Garden centres and growers (and even gardeners!) should be a natural ally in the fight against invasive species, yet many of us have been slow to act. There are a couple of reasons for this:

First, invasive plant species often exhibit characteristics that, as gardeners, we find irresistible or that make them easier to grow and maintain. Many have attractive and unique visual characteristics.

Second, there is some disagreement on which plants are truly invasive and which ones are not. When such disagreements exist, it's tempting to continue with the status quo until clarity emerges. These plants pay our bills, keep our staff employed, and keep our valued customers happy. During times of uncertainty and economic turbulence, it's difficult for retailers to do away with "tried-and-true" species when 1) there are still scattered debates over whether they're *actually* invasive or not, 2) what the severity of their invasiveness is, and 3) whether cultivated varieties are to be treated differently than their parent species.

But we have to start ***somewhere***, and we have to start ***now***.

Beginning with the 2018 season, **Van Luyk Greenhouses and Garden Centre will no longer be carrying invasive plant species, including their associated cultivars.**

For the time being, we will be deferring to the expertise of the [Upper Thames River Conservation Authority](#) (UTRCA) when determining which species are invasive and which ones are not. We referred to the UTRCA's list of invasive species as of September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to determine what we would and would not offer for the 2018 season. We understand that the UTRCA may update their list as time goes on, but we are optimistic that our decision may at least initiate some important conversations.

We're happy to assist our valued customers in selecting suitable alternatives to invasive species. We will also make a concerted effort to educate our customers on the drawbacks of invasive species and the advantages of native or near-native plants.

Our hope is that we might encourage gardeners, growers, garden centres, experts, and municipalities to expand existing dialogues in the effort to control invasive species of plants.

On the following page, you will find a list of species of trees, shrubs, and perennials that we have ordinarily carried but which going forward we will not be offering due to their decidedly invasive nature. This list may change or become updated as time passes and some of our concerns are addressed. Where suitable alternatives are available, we have listed them.

Invasive Species (Tree)	Our Alternatives
Amur Maple ( <i>Acer ginnala</i> )	Paperbark Maple ( <i>Acer griseum</i> ) Downy Serviceberry ( <i>Amelanchier canadensis</i> ) Fringe Tree ( <i>Chionanthus virginicus</i> )
Norway Maple ( <i>Acer platanoides</i> )	Regal Petticoats Maple ( <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> ) Autumn Blaze Maple ( <i>Acer x freemanii</i> )
White Mulberry ( <i>Morus Alba</i> )	Weeping Peashrub ( <i>Caragana arborescens</i> ) Weeping Flowering Cherry ( <i>Prunus serrulata</i> , etc.)
Sweet Cherry ( <i>Prunus avium</i> )	Sour Cherry ( <i>Prunus cerasifera</i> ) Romance Series Cherry ( <i>Prunus x kerrasis</i> )
Robe-Locust ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> )	Ivory Silk Japanese Lilac ( <i>Syringa reticulata</i> ) Amur Maackia ( <i>Maackia amurensis</i> )
Invasive Species (Shrub)	Our Alternatives
Japanese Barberry ( <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> )	"Wine" series Weigela ( <i>Weigela florida</i> ) Glow Girl Birchleaf Spirea ( <i>Spiraea betulifolia</i> ) Magic Carpet Spirea ( <i>Spiraea bumalda</i> )
Common Privet ( <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i> )	California Privet ( <i>Ligustrum x ibolium</i> ) Hick's Yew ( <i>Taxus x media</i> ) Dwarf Burningbush ( <i>Euonymus alatus compacta</i> )
Japanese Honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera japonica</i> )	Virgin's Bower ( <i>Clematis virginiana</i> )
Red Currant ( <i>Ribes rubrum</i> )	Romance Series Cherry ( <i>Prunus x kerrasis</i> )
Common Lilac ( <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> )	Hyacinth Lilac ( <i>Syringa hyacinthiflora</i> ) Preston Lilac ( <i>Syringa x prestoniae</i> )
Invasive Species (Perennial)	Our Alternatives
Bugleweed ( <i>Ajuga reptans</i> )	Sulphur Barrenwort ( <i>Epimedium</i> )
Lily-of-the-Valley ( <i>Convallaria majalis</i> )	Blue Waterfall Bellflower ( <i>Campanula posch.</i> )
Purple Deadnettle ( <i>Lamium purpureum</i> )	Sulphur Barrenwort ( <i>Epimedium</i> ) Creeping Phlox (sun only; <i>Phlox subulata</i> ) Creeping Thyme (sun only; <i>Thymus serpyllum</i> )
Maiden Grass ( <i>Miscanthus</i> )	Feather Reed Grass ( <i>Calamagrostis</i> ) Switch Grass ( <i>Panicum</i> )
Periwinkle ( <i>Vinca minor</i> )	Sulphur Barrenwort ( <i>Epimedium</i> ) Creeping Phlox (sun only; <i>Phlox subulata</i> ) Creeping Thyme (sun only; <i>Thymus serpyllum</i> )

**Please note that the UTRCA may update their invasive species list from time to time, and ours will be updated as frequently as possible to keep up on necessary adjustments.**