


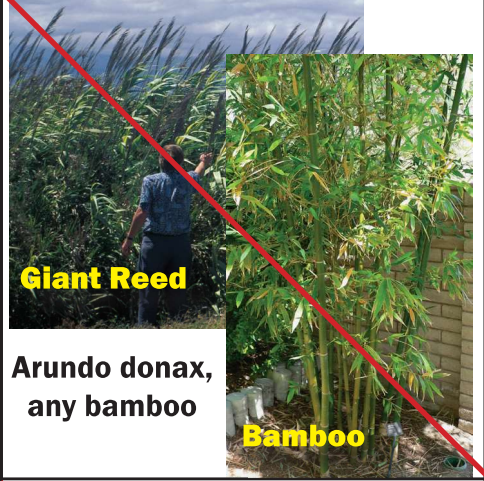
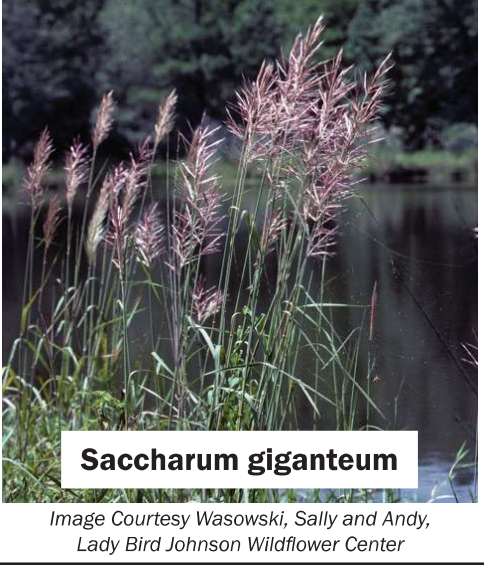
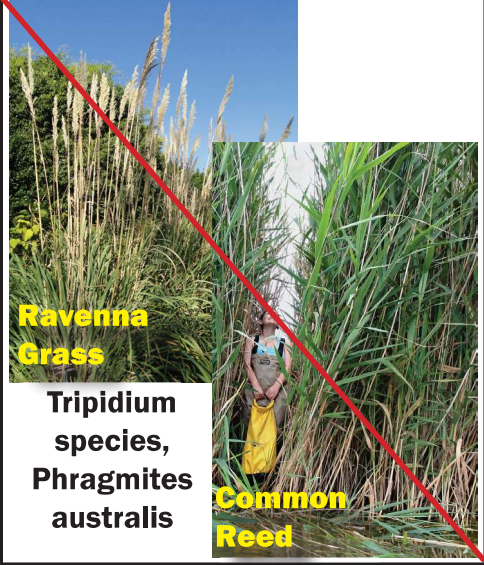


Plant this! Not that!

Planting native species does not need to feel like a compromise!

Many of our native species are nearly identical to the invasive species we need to replace, while others are equally pleasing to the eye. This list is for the gardeners who mean well, who love many of the creatures they see out in the wild but cannot understand how saving them has suddenly become their responsibility, who are getting stressed out over all of the rules in native gardening, who aren't interested in joining any movements, who understand that the plants that are sentimental to them are also potentially causing harm to local habitats but don't think it's as bad as people say it is, who are still willing to see if maybe there's something better they could plant instead but don't know where to start, and who understand that bugs are important, but not important enough to convince them they should harbor them in their own gardens.

This is for the gardeners who just really love plants.

If you like what you see here, check us out on <https://www.amblerfg.org/>

<i>Plant this!</i>	<i>Not that!</i>	Info & Alternatives
 <p>Arundinaria gigantea</p>	 <p>Giant Reed Arundo donax, any bamboo Bamboo</p>	<p>Rivers, streams and even wet, open woods in the US used to be lined with thick canebrakes which acted as a host for numerous native butterfly species, and provided shelter for birds and wildlife. In some parts of the country, they were so thick, it was impossible for anyone to pass through them, with culms reportedly as thick as a man's arm reaching 30-40ft high. These will likely never get this big in our lifetimes, or as thick, and the canebreak ecosystem has been virtually wiped out. These are the only native bamboos in the US. Arundinaria appalachiana - Hill cane Arundinaria tecta - Switchcane</p>
 <p>Saccharum giganteum</p> <p><small>Image Courtesy Wasowski, Sally and Andy, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center</small></p>	 <p>Ravenna Grass Tripidium species, Phragmites australis Common Reed</p>	<p>We do have a native, hardy "sugarcane!" These grasses, also known as broomsedges, were not the ones that were harvested for sugar production, but they belong to the same family. The majority of the Saccharum family are tropical and subtropical species, but a few can be found as far north as Pennsylvania and NJ. Phragmites can be found growing in a similar wetland habitat, but unfortunately the majority of Phragmites you will find in the wild are the invasive P. australis. Make sure you are planting the native, as the two are very similar. Saccharum alopecuroides - Silver Plumegrass Saccharum brevibarbe - Narrow Plumegrass Phragmites americanus - American reed</p>
 <p>Sorghastrum nutans</p> <p><small>Image Courtesy Wasowski, Sally and Andy, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center</small></p>	 <p>Chinese Silver Grass Miscanthus sinensis</p>	<p>We have many beautiful native ornamental grasses that will wow your garden visitors - especially the bluestems, which change colors through the seasons (and are available in many beautiful cultivars), also capable of reaching impressive heights. I personally didn't care for grasses until I saw these. Sisachyrium scoparium - Little Bluestem Andropogon gerardii - Big Bluestem Panicum virgatum - Switchgrass Eragostris spectabilis - Purple lovegrass Muhlenbergia capillaris - Pink muhly grass</p>

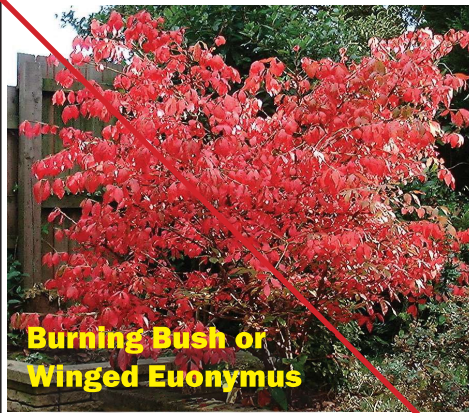
Plant this!

Not that!

Info & Alternatives



Euonymus atropurpureus

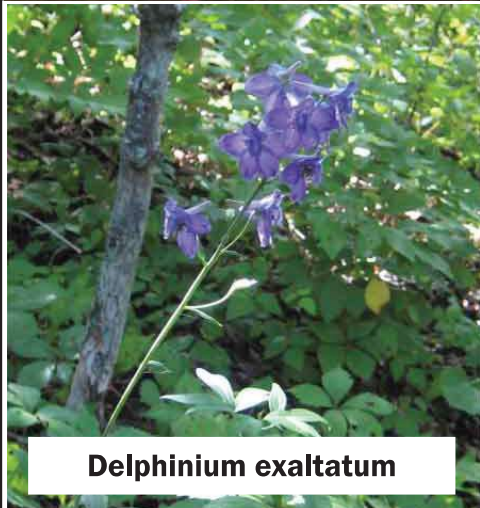


Burning Bush or Winged Euonymus

Euonymus alatus

You can plant native and have your gorgeous, red, fall color too! We have native burning bushes - not just one, but three! The Eastern wahoo can grow to be as big and tall as the winged euonymus, whereas hearts-a-burstin' (also known as strawberry bush, for its beautiful red seedheads) remains a bit smaller, but stems remain green through the winter season. The much lesser known running strawberry bush is a tall ground-cover, reaching 3 ft. Our blueberry species also turn red in fall, but double as a food crop.

- Euonymus americanus** - Hearts-a-burstin'
- Euonymus obovatus** - Running strawberry bush
- Vaccinium sp.** - Blueberry



Delphinium exaltatum

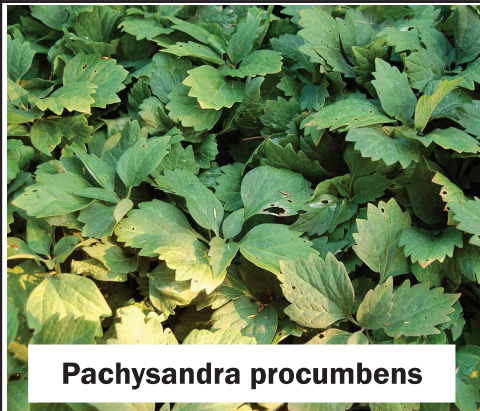


Spanish bluebells

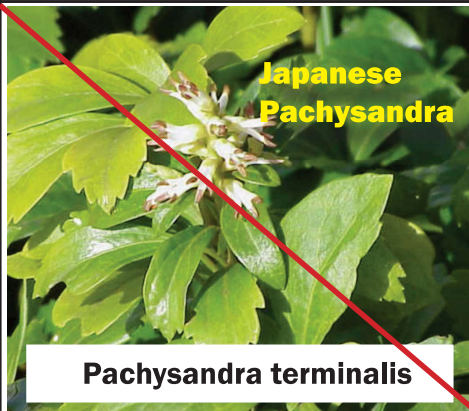
Hyacinthoides hispanica

If you thought that native wildflowers all looked "weedy," look again. There are many native species available that are stunning and also double as cut flowers. Unlike Spanish bluebells, the tall larkspur can reach impressive heights of 6ft, can come in white, and blooms from July through September, long after the bluebells are done. Don't worry, we have spring-blooming bluebells, too - our Virginia bluebells, the blooms which change from pink to purple on the same plant.

- Mertensia virginica** - Virginia bluebells
- Gentiana clausa** - Bottle gentian
- Campanula americana** - Tall bellflower
- Campanula rotundifolia** - Harebell



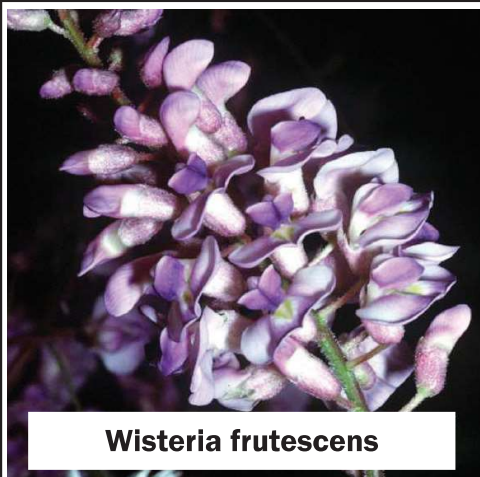
Pachysandra procumbens



Japanese Pachysandra

Pachysandra terminalis

I bet you didn't know we had a native Pachysandra! Unlike the invasive Japanese pachysandra, our native one is much better behaved (to the point of being a bit slow to get established), with a blue-green leaf color that can be mottled with water spots, and remains evergreen as well - though it grows much closer to the ground than the Japanese variety. If you need something that fills in quickly, but doesn't need to remain evergreen, **Hydrophyllum virginianum** (Virginia waterleaf) also works, and has beautiful blue flowers.



Wisteria frutescens



Japanese Wisteria

Wisteria floribunda, Wisteria sinensis

Chinese Wisteria

Why plant the invasive wisteria, which will tear down your house if you let it and needs a lot of work to keep under control, when you could plant our American native wisteria! Just like the exotic species, the American one does need to be pruned for better blooms, and its woody stem, which can also be trained into a tree-form, remains through winter. For vines which die back in the winter months, you can try one of the alternatives here:

- Apios americana** - American groundnut
- Clematis occidentalis var occidentalis** - Eastern purple clematis

Plant this!

Not that!

Info & Alternatives



Lilium philadelphicum



Orange Daylily

Hemerocallis fulva

Some people love their orange daylilies, which are not true lilies at all, but they absolutely can take over if you let them - and even if you don't. They have absolutely no problem making sure that you will not be growing anything else in their presence, which is the same problem we are facing in our natural habitats. Why not try *Lilium philadelphicum*, which also works as a swap for the exotic tiger lilies. If you really love all things lily, these other lilies are sure to wow your guests:
Lilium superbum - American turk's cap lily
Lilium canadense - Canada lily
Lilium michiganense - Michigan lily



Viburnum trilobum



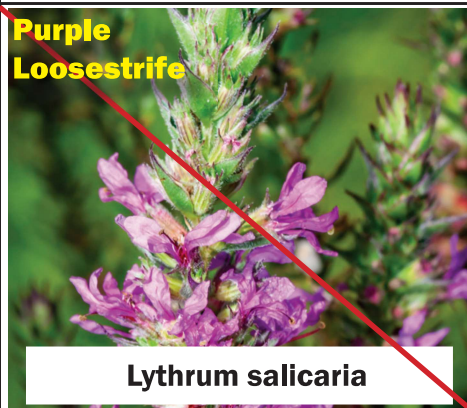
Heavenly Bamboo

Nandina domestica

Although the heavenly bamboo isn't on our invasive species list yet, it is certainly on the ones further south, and is likely to make its way north in the warming climate. Many plant this because the red berries are very attractive to birds in the winter months - what many don't know is they are also quite deadly to our Cedar waxwings. May we suggest the Highbush cranberry (which is not a true cranberry, but does have red berries like the Nandina)? The flowers are similar to lacecap hydrangeas, the leaves which resemble maples turn red in the fall, and the fruit is just as popular with birds, but much safer and healthier for them.
Aronia arbutifolia (red chokeberry) also has attractive red fruit.



Lythrum alatum



Purple Loosestrife

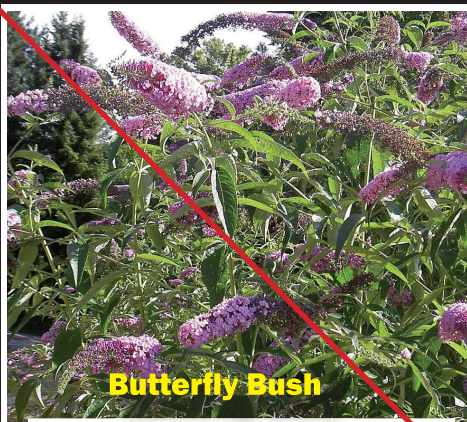
Lythrum salicaria

The purple loosestrife, as pretty as it may be, has unfortunately taken over our wetlands. The native winged loosestrife looks almost identical to the invasive one - the key difference being the position of the flowers along the winged stems. Although it is listed as endangered in Pennsylvania, this one can be found in local nurseries, and Ambler-Keystone Farm & Garden even provided seeds for this one in the Upper Dublin library seed bank.



Amorpha canescens

Image Courtesy Bengston, Bennie,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



Butterfly Bush

Buddleja davidii

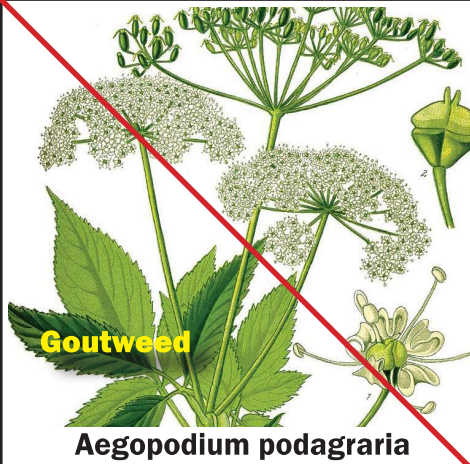
It's difficult to choose a replacement for the butterfly bush, because the vast majority of our floriferous plants are "butterfly bushes." That being said, we do have one that looks quite similar to the invasive one, can also grow to an impressive size, and is loaded with purple blooms - the Leadplant. The foliage is also incredibly attractive with its texture, similar to that of (invasive) mimosas and another popular native which shares another common name - the false indigo. If you want something that remains a bit smaller than the leadplant, the blue false indigo **Baptisia australis** is equally popular with the flutter-bys.

Plant this!



Achillea millefolium

Not that!



Goutweed

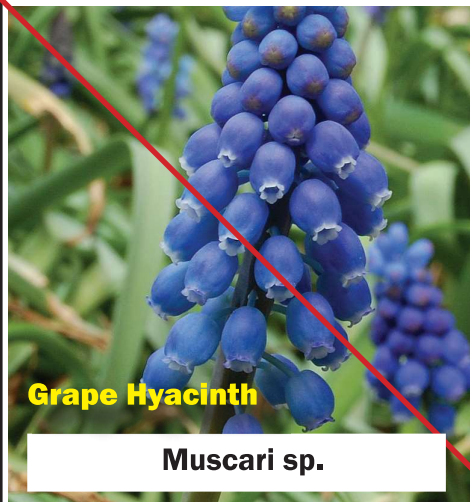
Aegopodium podagraria

Info & Alternatives

We have many native species with lacy white flowers that can easily replace this one, ones which are far less likely to take over your entire garden and far beyond (and if they do, easy to pull up). The common yarrow is popular enough that most don't even realize we have a native one (there are non-native yarrows as well). Plant one of each of all of these alternatives and you could have lacy white blooms most of the year. Some you may already have growing.
Eupatorium perfoliatum - Boneset
Eupatorium serotinum - Late boneset
Eupatorium altissimum - Tall boneset
Ageratina altissima - White snakeroot



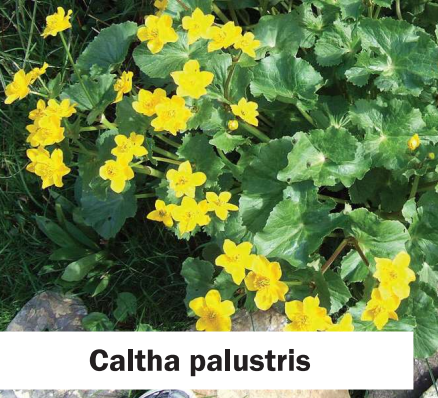
Camassia scilloides



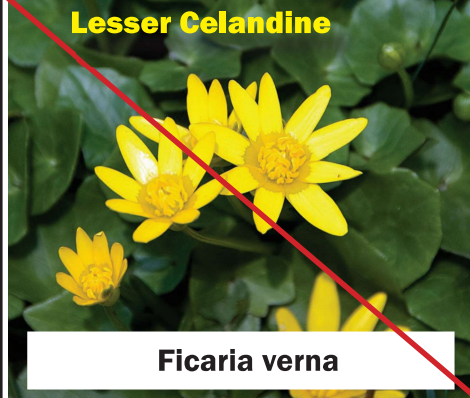
Grape Hyacinth

Muscari sp.

This one is a tough one to hate, especially with how easily it spreads, popping up in our lawns and adorning them with cute bulbous blooms. Unfortunately, this quality is also what makes them invasive, popping up pretty much everywhere they don't belong (much to the detriment of our native habitats). We do have native hyacinths, ones which are far more beneficial to our ecosystems. The eastern camas is typically white, but can be found in other colors, including blue. Although the common camas **Camassia quamash** is a west-coast native, it is not considered invasive in the eastern US, and can also present with the deep blue color of Muscari. Better yet, these camas are edible (so if it spreads too much, eat it).



Caltha palustris



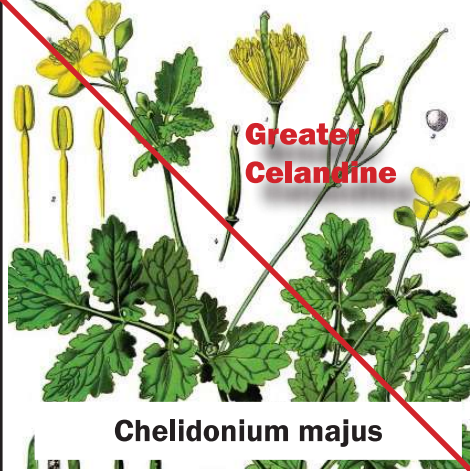
Lesser Celandine

Ficaria verna

Lesser celandine, loved by those who don't know it, hated by everyone who does. This seemingly innocent little buttercup is the bane of all eastern woodlands (and properties), and is the plant equivalent of that relative that if you let them step foot in your door, they'll bring all their friends, and you cannot get rid of them. The native marsh marigold is so similar, it can be difficult to tell the two apart. Still, if you would like a ground cover that fills in quickly and is beneficial to our ecosystems (unlike the lesser celandine), **Packera aurea** is another great alternative.



Stylophorum diphyllum



Greater Celandine

Chelidonium majus

While we're on the topic of celandines, the lesser one isn't necessarily the lesser of two evils (at least in southeastern PA). We do also have a greater celandine problem, though luckily not as bad as the other. Still, this is also one to avoid, and one that is easily replaced - so easily, in fact, that the native one was also, at one point, known as the Celandine poppy. We now refer to it as the wood poppy to avoid any possible confusion with common names. Additional alternatives to try would be the same as those mentioned above, **Caltha palustris** (marsh marigold) or one of the **Packera** (there are a few). **Oenothera biennis** would also work on dry, sunny sites.

Plant this!

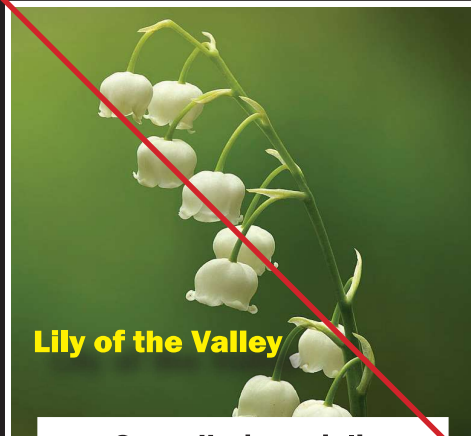
Not that!

Info & Alternatives



Convallaria majuscula

Image Courtesy Cressler, Alan,
Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center



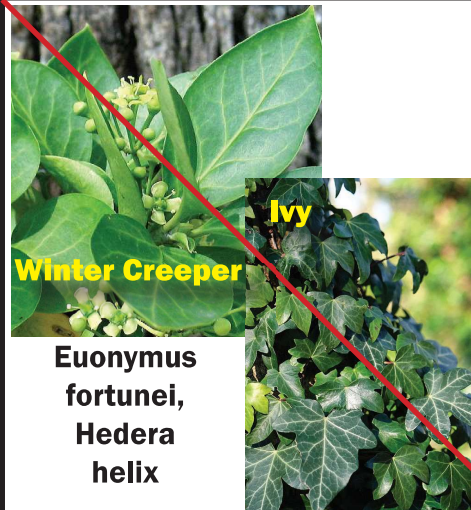
Lily of the Valley

Convallaria majalis

You probably were unaware of the fact that the beloved Lily-of-the-Valley is invasive. And, if you were aware of the fact that it is invasive, you probably didn't think we have a native one. Most people are unaware of the latter, because it is a fairly recent discovery, relatively unknown, and endemic to a small area in the southern portion of the Appalachian mountains. The American Lily-of-the-valley blooms are taller than the invasive one (which I think makes them better). Other great alternatives to these would be Solomon's seal **Polygonatum biflorum var biflorum**, Giant Solomon's seal **P. biflorum var commutatum**, or any of the **Maianthemum** species.



Parthenocissus quinquefolia



Winter Creeper

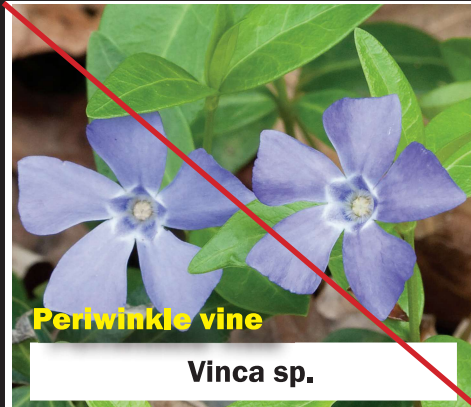
Ivy

Euonymus fortunei, Hedera helix

Of all of the invasive species on the list, these may be the most difficult to swap, simply because we do not have much in the way of native evergreen climbers (which is how we would classify both the winter creeper and English ivy shown to the left). Still, we do have options. Virginia creeper has beautiful palmate foliage that turns a gorgeous red in the fall, has fruit that the birds love, and grows and spreads eagerly. Don't let it grow on buildings because of the sticky pads it uses to adhere to them, but trees are okay. It is deciduous, not evergreen. Two options for semi-evergreen vines would be **Bignonia capreolata** with red trumpet flowers that attract hummingbirds and **Gelsemium sempervirens** with yellow fragrant blooms.



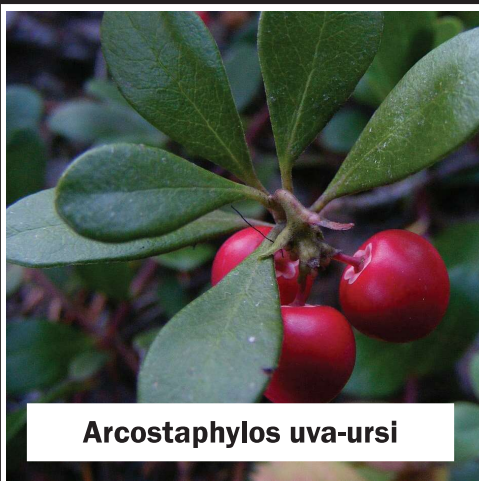
Mitchella repens



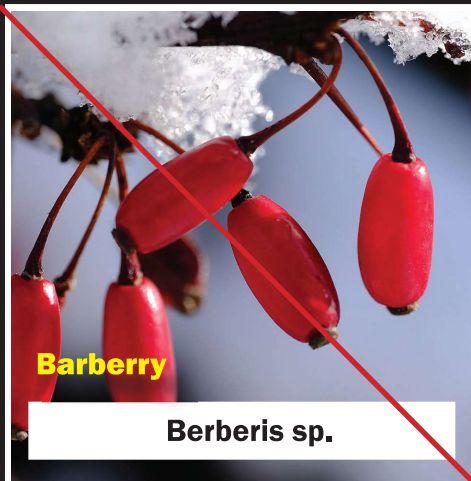
Periwinkle vine

Vinca sp.

While we're on the topic of evergreen vines, let's tackle the vincas. While the partridge berry does not have the same periwinkle flowers, the white fuzzy flowers are far more unusual, the tiny leaves are precious, and the bright red fruits persist through the winter months - if the animals don't eat them all first of course - making this one ideal for the winter holidays. If it's the flowers you want, **Phlox divaricata** grows in the shade, and the blooms are almost identical. In this case, why not plant both to get the same effect?



Arcostaphylos uva-ursi



Barberry

Berberis sp.

Our native alternative pick for the formidable Berberis would be the bear bear bear-ry (Arcostaphylos means "bear grapes" in Greek, uva-ursi means "grape of the bear" in Latin - someone had fun naming this one). Unlike the Berberis, our bear berries do not have angry thorns, and does grow quite a bit lower to the ground, but given time, it can spread out quite a few feet, making it the ideal evergreen groundcover for dry sites. Its deep roots also make it a great option for dry, sunny or shady slopes. If it's the tall spikey security feature you're after, there are several dwarf cultivars of our native **Ilex opaca** to choose from.

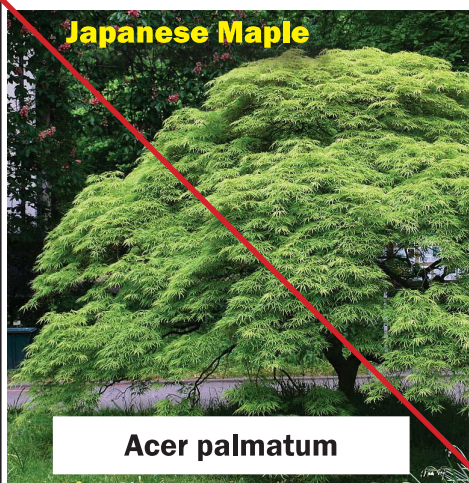
Plant this!

Not that!

Info & Alternatives



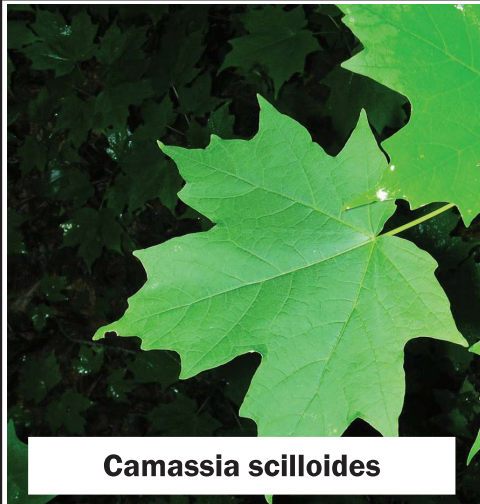
Comptonia peregrina



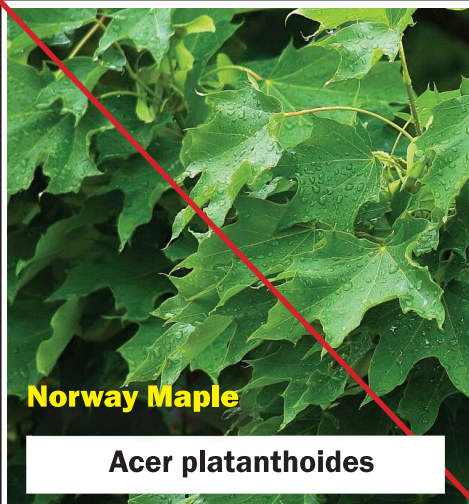
Japanese Maple

Acer palmatum

We know... this one is incredibly painful (try to imagine the author wincing here). For many of us, it would have been better to have never known it exists, than to have grown it and find out it will need to go. For the graceful, mounding dwarf Japanese maple with its fern-like foliage, we offer the Sweetfern (a native shrub with fern-like foliage, not a true fern) which also turns a bright red in the fall. The bonus feature of this is the incredible fragrance of its crushed leaves, which the Japanese maple lacks (author approves). For the taller variety, **Acer rubrum** is available in a number of dwarf cultivars which turn a fiery red in the fall, just like its Japanese counterpart.



Camassia scilloides



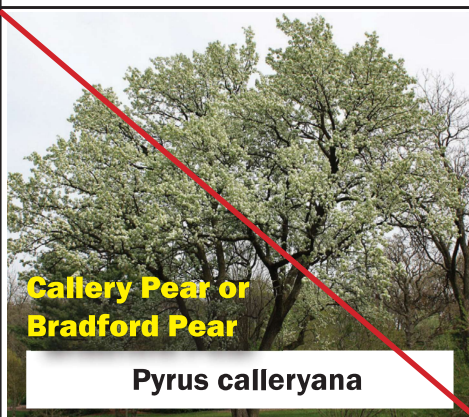
Norway Maple

Acer platanthoides

I have absolutely no idea why anyone thought we needed another maple, when we have so many. At least there was seemingly a good reason for the Japanese ones (obviously no longer the case). I suppose those in the 1700s wanted to make sure they would have a maple tree, not realizing we already had plenty to choose from that look just like it. They don't even live long here, becoming a problem for homeowners in a short span of time. The sugar maple is a far better alternative, nearly identical in appearance, and is much longer lived, 200-300 years as opposed to 60 for the Norway maple. **Acer saccharinum** is similar, but far more brittle. If you like both, **Acer x freemani** is a natural hybrid of the two.



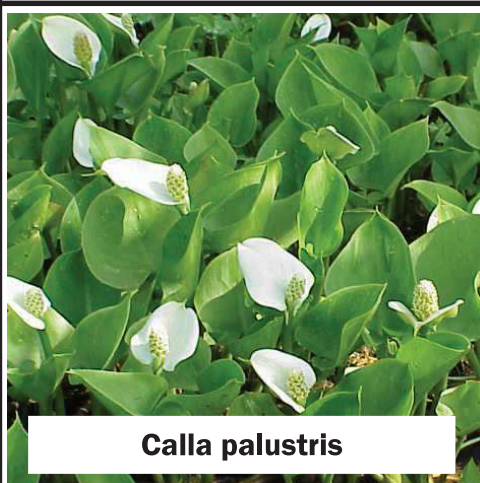
Amelanchier arborea



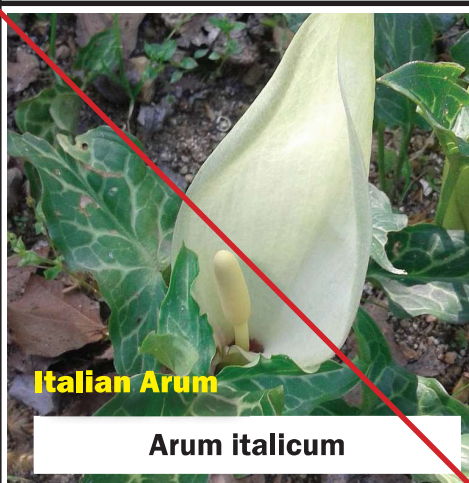
Callery Pear or Bradford Pear

Pyrus calleryana

The dreadful callery pear - widely planted as an ornamental street tree for its early, white, Spring blooms, which I imagine were intended to be enjoyed from behind closed windows to avoid its offensive odor. Among the earliest to bloom of our native shrubs is the **Amelanchier**, of which we have many species to choose from, quickly followed by **Prunus**, then followed after that by **Crataegus**. Any of those three would be a better alternative to this invasive pear tree. The downy serviceberry pictured can reach sizes of 40 ft, if size is what you're after.



Calla palustris



Italian Arum

Arum italicum

The Italian arum is not listed as an invasive species in PA, but it is invasive in some states, and worth a mention in this list. Once it is established, it is incredibly difficult to be rid of it, and that's why it can pose a problem. Fortunately, we do have a native calla "lily" here on the east coast, with its cordate leaves and white spathes enclosing its spadix. If it's the fruit of the Italian arum that you find attractive, our two native Arisaema species fit the bill. **Arisaema triphyllum** is our beloved Jack-in-the-pulpit, and the slightly less common **Arisaema dracontium**, the Green Dragon, has fantastic compound leaves resembling dragon claws, hence the name.

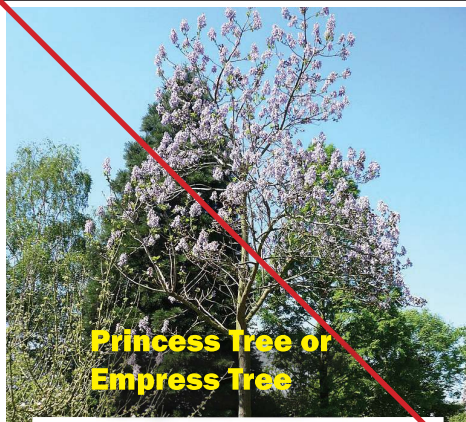
Plant this!

Not that!

Info & Alternatives



Robinia hispida



**Princess Tree or
Empress Tree**

Paulownia tomentosa

The only distress we find this damsel in is the one she's created; the incredibly invasive princess tree is one I frequently find myself pulling out of the ground with no idea where it came from. There are a number of alternatives you can try. **Wisteria frutescens**, mentioned earlier, can be trained as a tree, though this takes some effort. The rose-acacia (pictured) is native a bit further south but native/adventive in PA, has pink blooms and grows to about 12 ft tall. **Robinia pseudoacacia** grows taller, is native to Pennsylvania and has white blooms (there are thornless cultivars available). **Cercis canadensis** has cordate leaves like Paulownia, with a mass of smaller magenta blooms.



Lonicera sempervirens



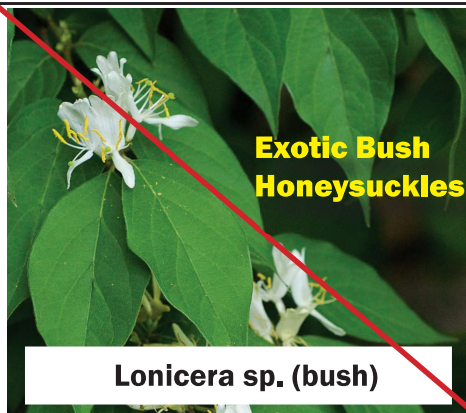
**Japanese
Honeysuckle**

Lonicera japonica

Lonicera japonica may play a role in many of our childhoods what with plucking the flowers off and pulling the ends to enjoy the drop of nectar from them - but that's because it is so incredibly invasive. It might be easier to be rid of if it didn't put a node with a long taproot about every foot or so of the vine that touches the ground, before proceeding to strangle smaller shrubs and smother anything it climbs. This coral honeysuckle is not the same as trumpet creeper, **Campsis radicans**, which is native as well but may be too vigorous for smaller gardens. **Bignonia capreolata** is similar but semi-evergreen, and **Lonicera dioica** sports beautiful pink/wine blooms.



Diervilla lonicera



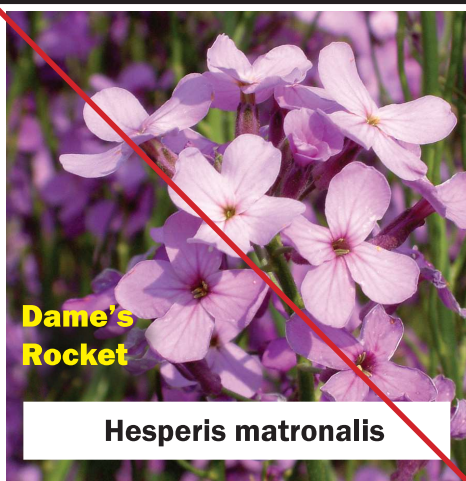
**Exotic Bush
Honeysuckles**

Lonicera sp. (bush)

Several of the invasive species on the list are bush honeysuckles, with blooms that range from white to yellow to pink (as the tartarian honeysuckle). We have far more native vining honeysuckles than bushy ones, but our native northern honeysuckle bush fills all those needs, as the blooms start out with a pale yellow, then transition to orange and red as they age. If you need the pink and are willing to train it on a short trellis for the bushy look, **Lonicera dioica** would be a better option.



Phlox paniculata



**Dame's
Rocket**

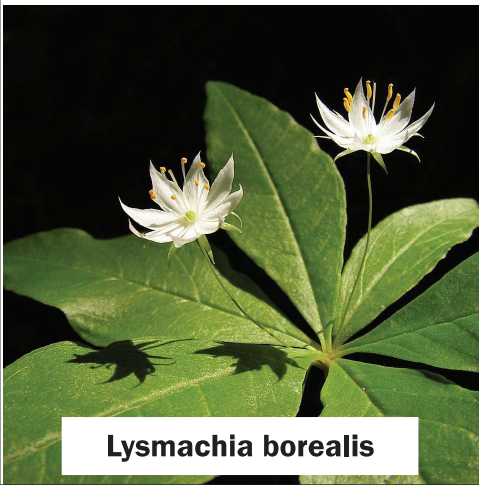
Hesperis matronalis

The invasive Dame's rocket is another one that people plant (or allow to grow) thanks to its admittedly beautiful pinkish purple blooms. There is a native purple rocket, **Iodanthus pinnaefidus** with light purple flowers that fade to white with age. The garden phlox is a much better swap for this one visually, and phloxes come in many different wonderful species and colors.

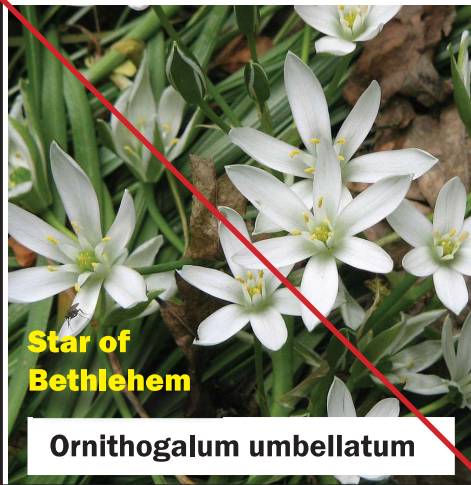
Plant this!

Not that!

Info & Alternatives



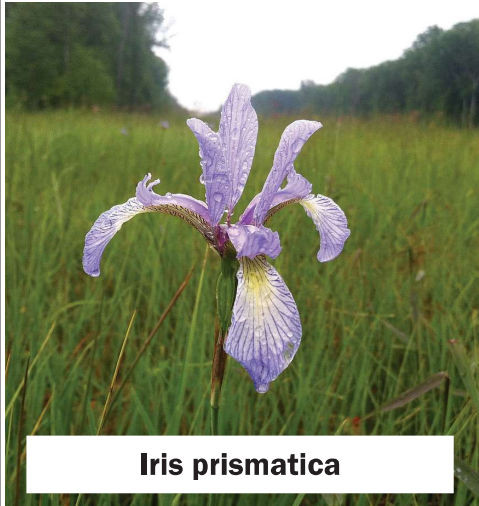
Lysmachia borealis



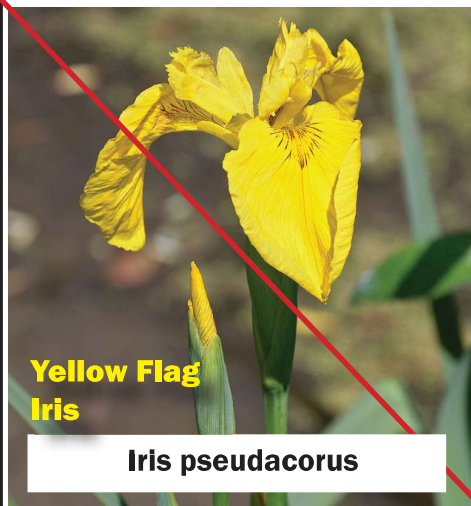
Star of Bethlehem

Ornithogalum umbellatum

The star of bethlehem is another one that is beautiful until it shows up in one's garden, and the difficulty of eradicating it quickly changes one's opinion on the matter. Luckily we have our own star flower. This one comes with a latin binomial synonym of *Trientalis borealis*, so be sure to search for both when trying to obtain it. Another great alternative to this, with the adorably unusual pink pollen, is **Claytonia virginica**. If you have spring beauties covering your lawn, flowerbeds, and everything in between, count yourself lucky, as this one is challenging to propagate from seed, and many who would eagerly take any extra off your hands.



Iris prismatica



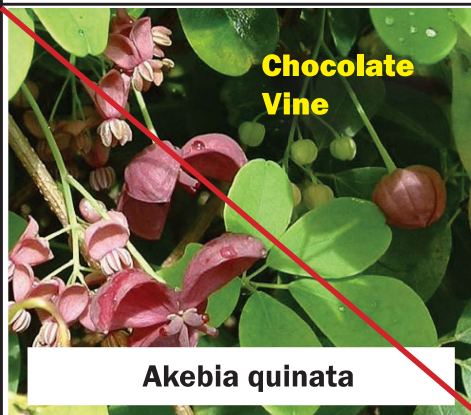
Yellow Flag Iris

Iris pseudacorus

I know, the swap for this one is not the same color as the invasive one, but there is yellow present, and I have seen a photo that claims to be a slender blue iris that is all yellow, just like the invasive yellow flag iris. So, if one is into cultivating and propagating irises, it may be worth playing around with this rare (endangered in Pennsylvania) beauty. Other irises native to Pennsylvania (all in the blue color range) include **Iris cristata**, **Iris versicolor**, **Iris verna** and **Iris virginica**, so we certainly have plenty to choose from. Some even have cultivars, like *Iris versicolor* 'Purple Flame,' which has purple leaves and puts the yellow flag iris to shame.



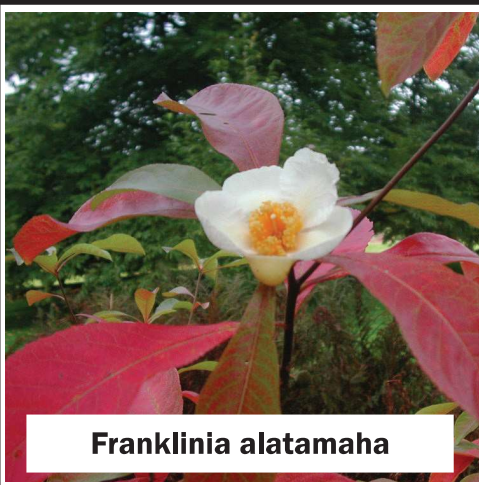
Apios americana



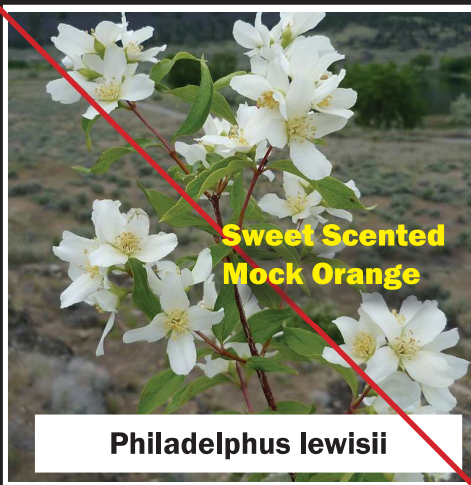
Chocolate Vine

Akebia quinata

This is another relatively easy swap - although the flowers are not similar in shape, they're quite similar in color. The added benefit of the native one is in its common name - the groundnut. This vine produces edible tubers that can be prepared similar to potatoes, and were believed to be among the foods eaten by the first colonists. Who knew vegetables could be so beautiful?



Franklinia alatamaha



Sweet Scented Mock Orange

Philadelphus lewisii

Here we have a case of a western US native becoming invasive on the eastern coast. Don't let the latin binomial fool you, this plant did not originate anywhere near Philadelphia. The swap suggested here, on the other hand, was spared from extinction thanks to the Bartrams of Philadelphia, who discovered the last remaining stand of it along the Alatamaha river in Georgia and collected the seed. The next time they returned, all of the remaining trees were gone, never to be seen again. All of our modern day Franklinias are descendants of those collected by the Bartrams. There is a mock orange also native to PA, **Philadelphus inodorus**, the difference being that it is not fragrant.