



Hedera helix (English ivy)



Nandina (Heavenly Bamboo)

Invasive Plants Often Emanate from Southern Gardens

Did you know that heavenly bamboo, thorny olive, English ivy, Boston fern, privets and many garden favorites are invading forests to their and thus our detriment? Garden clubs should band together to protect our natural vegetation against invasive plants that take over the habitat of the native flora. Often called non-native, exotic, or noxious weeds, they occur as trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, ferns, and forbs. Some have been introduced into this country accidentally, but most were brought here as ornamentals, often long ago. Tree-of-heaven, Japanese honeysuckle, mimosa and glossy privet came to our shores from Asia in the 1700's.

These robust plants arrive without their natural predators of insects and diseases that tend to keep native plants in natural balance. Most have hybridized through multiple introductions to become more cold hardy, drought resistant, and aggressive. Thousands of new ornamental species and cultivars are introduced in the U.S. each year with no testing requirements of their invasiveness. Now they increase across the landscape with little opposition, beyond the control and reclamation measures applied by landowners and managers on individual land holdings.

Garden clubs are the centers for plant experts and enthusiasts, and leaders within our communities. Garden clubs should play a major role in educating growers, nurseries, and fellow gardeners of the ongoing invasions of exotic plants. You can be a voice of reason against the willy-



Eleagnus (Thorny olive)

nilly introduction of aggressive plants for ornamentals. Integrated vegetation management programs are needed to combat invading nonnative plants.

Strategies of surveillance and



treatment of new arrivals will safeguard lands, and rehabilitation of existing infestations can be achieved by concerted control measures and reestablishment of native vegetation. Garden club participation is needed in the Alabama Invasive Plant Council if we are to be successful in slowing the tide of entry and spread. An overview of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council and those in our region and in the U.S. can be found at <http://www.se-eppc.org>, and click on Alabama or others.

Comprehensive lists of all plants that are considered to be invasive in the Southern Region can be viewed at <http://www.invasive.org/seeweeds.cfm> and www.invasive.org/south/, which is useful for constructing prevention and control strategies. There are maps showing the unbelievable occupation of 33 worst invasives in Southern Forests and Grasslands.

Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forest – A Field Guide for Identification and Control can be requested from the Southern Research Station via email pubrequest@fs.fed.us or phone (828) 257-4830 or by mail at Southern Research Station, 200 W.T. Weaver Boulevard, Asheville, NC 28804-3454. This publication can be your first step for learn to identify troublesome invasives and options for control and the ecological damage that invasive plants currently do to our forests, preserves, farm lands and adjacent waterways. We hope you will join this effort in the concerted and cooperative battle to stem the invasive tide.

James H. Miller, Research Ecologist, USDA Forest Service R&D, Auburn University and Anne Miller, President of the Perry Garden Club of Auburn