

[Why are we concerned with invasive plants?](#)

Invasive plants pose a threat to our natural lands. Weeds are often easily controlled in a garden or landscape setting by pulling or using a weed killer. However, in natural areas, non-native invasive plants often spread without being noticed until they have taken over vast acreages and ruined native plant and animal habitats in natural areas.

Once established, exotic invasive plants are expensive to control because they often reproduce and spread at alarming rates. It is estimated that the State of Florida spends almost \$9 million per year on invasive plant management. These expenditures are used to support a balanced Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan that includes mechanical control, biological control, herbicides, land management practices and educational strategies.

Because of our warm climate, comparatively high acreages of wetlands and our highly transient society Florida has been dealing with introduced invasive species for decades. Indeed, many invading plants thrive here!

It is very important to prevent the establishment of plants because once they get a foothold they become very difficult to remove. These, naturalized plants easily complete all phases of their life cycle and most reproduce either through vegetative means or by seed or both.

It has been estimated that over 25,000 non-native plant species have been introduced to Florida for various purposes while others have been introduced accidentally. Of these, 1,180 are known to have established populations that survive and reproduce on their own (naturalized). These plants represent about 30% of the states Flora. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant council considers 138 species to be invasive, in Florida. 67 of these are considered to be altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing plant communities structure or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives.



Two leaf types of Japanese climbing tree fern. Hunters should be particularly concerned about this plant since it is spreading rapidly in parts of the county. This plant displaces wildlife forages.

Bradford County hosts at least 21 non-native invasive plants:

Air Potato, (<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>)	Air Yam, (<i>Dioscorea alta</i>)
Ardisia, (<i>Ardisia crenata</i>)	Camphor, (<i>Cinnamomum camphora</i>)
Caesar weed, (<i>Urena lobata</i>)	Chinaberry, (<i>Melia azedarach</i>)
Chinese tallow, (<i>Tridica sebifera</i>)	Chinese wisteria, (<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>)
Japanese wisteria, (<i>Wisteria floribunda</i>)	Cogongrass, (<i>Imperata cylindrical</i>)
Japanese honeysuckle, (<i>Lonicera japonica</i>)	Japanese climbing fern, (<i>Lygodium japonicum</i>)
Mexican petunia, (<i>Ruellia brittoniana</i>)	Mimosa, (<i>Albizia julibrissian</i>)
Paper mulberry, (<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>)	Privet, (<i>Ligustrum sinense</i>)
Sesban, (<i>Sesbania punicea</i>)	Tropical soda apple, (<i>Solanum viarum</i>)
Wedelia, (<i>Wedelia trilobata</i>)	White flowered wandering jew, (<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>)
Wild Taro, (<i>Colcasia esculenta</i>)	

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