



# Alternatives to Exotic Invasive Plants in Alachua County

## Fact Sheet # 1711

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University of Florida IFAS Extension characterizes invasive plants as non-native plant species that displace native plant material and disrupt natural processes. Many invasive species were introduced into Florida because of their potential agricultural or ornamental value.

Throughout Alachua County, many of our exotic invasive plants arrived because of their ornamental quality. Many homeowners in the past have unknowingly planted invasive plants because they looked beautiful in the landscape. The plants quickly escaped, causing severe ecological damage.

A common invasive species in Alachua County is Coral Ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*). Coral Ardisia was brought into our area because of its high-aesthetic quality. Its prolific seed production causes Coral Ardisia to spread quickly throughout the landscape. The bright red fruits attract some critters, which further spreads Coral Ardisia around our area. It is very important to remove any Coral Ardisia in your yard.

When you are selecting plants for your landscape, it is very important to double- or triple-check your plant list to make sure you do not plant an invasive species. Although many of the invasive species can add aesthetic value to a landscape, there are non-invasive alternatives that can provide the same aesthetic qualities.

The following table provides a reference to common invasive species and great, non-invasive alternatives (Table 1). Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of invasive species within Alachua County.

### Coral Ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*)



Coral Ardisia is commonly seen in landscapes because of its bright red fruit. Coral Ardisia quickly spreads to surrounding areas and destroys native habitats. Photo Courtesy of UF/IFAS Assessment

### Mimosa Tree (*Albizia julibrissin*)



The Mimosa Tree is a native to southwest Asia is a showy tree, but his highly invasive. Key identification characteristics include fine texture leaves and flowers. Photo Courtesy of UF/IFAS Assessment



## Alternatives to Invasive Species

### Invasive Species

Arrowhead Vine - *Syngonium podophyllum*

Boston Sword Fern - *Nephrolepis cordifolia*

Asparagus Fern - *Asparagus densiflorus*

Bradford Pear – *Pyrus calleryana*

Bungleweed – *Ajuga reptans*

Camphor Tree - *Cinnamomum camphora*

Chinese Tallow Tree – *Triadica sebifera*

Coral Ardisia - *Ardisia crenata*

Dutchman's Pipe - *Aristolochia elegans*, *A. littoralis*

Elephant Ear/Wild Taro - *Xanthosoma sagittifolium*  
and *Colocasia esculenta*

Glossy Privet - *Ligustrum lucidum*  
Chinese Privet - *Ligustrum sinense*

Heavenly Bamboo - *Nandina domestica*

### Alternatives

Gingers - *Zingiber spp.*

Jacobinia – *Justicia carnea*

Holly Fern – *Cyrtomium falcatum*

Leatherleaf Fern – *Rumohra adiantiformis*

Southern Woods Fern – *Thelypteris kuntii*\*

Autumn Fern – *Dryopteris erythrosora*

Green Ash – *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*\*

Tulip Poplar – *Liriodendron tulipifera*\*

Twin Flower – *Dyschoriste oblongifolia*\*

Peacock Ginger - *Kaempferia spp.*

Loblolly Bay – *Gordonia lasianthus*\*

American Holly – *Ilex opaca*\*

Tulip Poplar – *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Eastern Redbud – *Cercis canadensis*\*

American Hophornbeam – *Ostrya virginiana*\*

Red Maple – *Acer rubrum*\*

American Strawberry Bush – *Euonymus americanus*\*

Beauty Berry – *Callicarpa americana*\*

Wild Coffee – *Psychotria nervosa*\*

Dutchman's Pipe – *Aristolochia labiata*\*, *A. maxima*, *A. rigens*, *A. serpentaria*\*

American Wisteria – *Wisteria frutescens*\*

Passion Flower Vine – *Passiflora incarnata*\*

Gingers – *Zingiber spp.*

Philodendrons – *Philodendron selloum*, *P. x 'Xanadu'*

Pickrel Weed – *Pontederia cordata*\*

Japanese Privet – *Ligustrum japonicum*

Arrowwood – *Viburnum dentatum*\*

Florida Anise – *Illicium floridanum*\*, *I. parviflorum*\*

Chinese Fringe Plant – *Loropetalum spp.*

Chinese Mahonia – *Mahonia fortuneii*



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Invasive Species

Indian Shot – *Canna indica*

Japanese Climbing Fern – *Lygodium japonicum*

Japanese Honeysuckle - *Lonicera japonica*

Lantana - *Lantana camara*, *L. montevidensis*

Wedelia - *Wedelia trilobata*

Mexican Petunia - *Ruellia tweediana*, *R. brittoniana*, and *R. coerulea*

Mimosa Tree - *Albizia julibrissin*

Rattle Box - *Sesbania punicea*

White-flowered Wandering Jew - *Tradescantia fluminensis*

Wisteria - *Wisteria sinensis*

Abelia – *Abelia x grandiflora*

Alternatives

Butterfly Iris – *Dietes iridoides*

Blue Flag Iris – *Iris virginica*\*

Trumpet Flower – *Bignonia capreolata*\*

Coral Honeysuckle – *Lonicera sempervirens*\*

Coral Honeysuckle – *Lonicera sempervirens*\*

Carolina Jasmine – *Gelsemium sempervirens*\*

Beach Sunflower – *Helianthus debilis*\*

Guara – *Guara Lindheimeri*

Gold/Wild Lantana – *Lantana depressa*\*, *L. involucrate*\*

Salvias – *Salvia* spp.

Plumbago – *Plumbago auriculata*

Native Wild Petunia – *Ruellia caroliniensis*\*

Bottlebrush Tree – *Callistemon citrinus*, *C. linearis*.

Fringe Tree – *Chionanthus virginicus*\*

Cassia – *Senna ligustrina*\*

Rain of Gold – *Galphimia gracilis*

Coral Bean – *Erythrina herbacea*\*

Fire Bush – *Hamelia patens*\*

Peacock Ginger – *Kaempferia* spp.

Native Violets – *Viola* spp.

American Wisteria – *Wisteria frutescens*\*

Blue Sky Vine – *Thunbergia grandiflora*

**Table One** lists common invasive species and alternative plants to use within the landscape. It is important to note the scientific names. Many plants have similar or the same common name, but the scientific name is unique.

\*Denotes Native Species

**For more information about invasive plants and their impact on natural areas, checkout the following websites:**

Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health <http://www.invasive.org>

Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council <http://www.fleppc.org/>

IFAS Assessment of Non-Native Plants <https://assessment.ifas.ufl.edu/>