

Central Texas Invasive Plants

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Volunteer Field Guide



**Watershed Protection
Development Review**

Chinaberry	<i>Melia azedarach</i>
Chinese Parasol Tree	<i>Firmiana simplex</i>
Chinese Pistache	<i>Pistacia chinensis</i>
Chinese Tallow	<i>Sapium sebiferum</i>
Common Privet	<i>Ligustrum sinense/L. vulgare</i>
Common Water Hyacinth	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>
Elephant Ear	<i>Alocasia spp., Colocasia spp.</i>
Eurasian Watermilfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>
Giant Cane	<i>Arundo donax</i>
Holly Fern	<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>
Hydrilla	<i>Hydrilla verticillata</i>
Japanese Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera japonica</i>
Johnson Grass	<i>Sorghum halepense</i>
Kudzu	<i>Pueraria lobata</i>
Mimosa, Silk Tree	<i>Albizia julbrissin</i>
Nandina	<i>Nandina domestica</i>
Paper Mulberry	<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>
Photinia	<i>Photinia spp.</i>
Poison Ivy	<i>Toxicodendron radicans</i>
Pyracantha	<i>Pyracantha spp.</i>
Running Bamboo	<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i>
Russian Olive	<i>Eleagnus angustifolia</i>
Tamarisk, Salt Cedar	<i>Tamarix spp.</i>
Tree of Heaven	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>
Vitex	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>
Waxleaf Ligustrum	<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>
White Mulberry	<i>Morus alba</i>
Wisteria	<i>Wisteria sinensis/W. floribunda</i>

Chinaberry

Melia azedarach



Description:

- Deciduous tree
- Multi-trunked with an open crown
- Grows to 50'
- Alternate, musky-smelling dark green leaves
- Stems are glossy greenish-brown with light dots
- Yellow fall foliage



Clusters of lavender flowers in spring



Mature fruit

TOXICITY WARNING
Mature fruits are poisonous

Chinaberry

Melia azedarach



Habitat:

Roadsides, older home sites and floodplains

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pulls out easily when plant is young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Chinquapin Oak
- Texas Red Oak

DO NOT PLANT
Spread by seeds, root sprouts

Chinese Parasol Tree

Firmiana simplex



Description:

- Deciduous, upright tree with a narrow canopy
- Grows 30-40' tall
- Large (12") leaves with 3-5 lobes
- Leaves bright green above, fuzzy underneath
- Yellow fall foliage
- Green Bark



Green Bark



Leaf

Chinese Parasol Tree

Firmiana simplex



Flowers in mid-summer

Habitat:

Prefers moist areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Remove small plants by hand
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Bald Cypress
- Arizona Cypress

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds

Chinese Pistache

Pistacia chinensis



Description:

- Deciduous tree
- Grows to 35'
- Leaves are yellow, orange and red in fall



Red fruit appears
in summer



Leaf

Chinese Pistache

Pistacia chinensis



Habitat:

Woodlands. open space, unmowed areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Remove small plants by hand
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Chinquapin Oak
- Texas Red Oak

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds

Chinese Tallow

Sapium sebiferum



Description:

- Deciduous tree
- Grows up to 60'
- Heart-shaped, alternate leaves



Flowers with long yellow, spike-like branches in fall



Three lobed, small clustered fruit splits to reveal popcorn-like seeds in spring

TOXICITY WARNING

Leaves, fruits and sap toxic to humans and most animals if ingested

Chinese Tallow

Sapium sebiferum



Fall foliage

Habitat:

Wetlands, streambanks and disturbed areas

Least toxic Removal:

- Remove seedlings by hand
- Use a Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter trunks or less
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as needed

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Lacey Oak
- Bigtooth Maple

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds, colonizes by root sprouts

Common Privet

Ligustrum sinense/L.vulgare



Description:

- Semi-evergreen shrub
- Often multi-trunked
- Leafy branches attached at near right angles
- Flowers spring thru summer



Opposite leaves



Fruit present summer through spring

Common Privet

Ligustrum sinense/L.vulgare



Habitat:

Fields and woodland understory

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Evergreen Yaupon
- Possumhaw Holly

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds, root sprouts

Common Water Hyacinth

Eichhornia crassipes



Description:

- Aquatic plant that floats on water
- Thick, shiny, bright green, kidney-shaped leaves; 1-5" in width



Large lavender flowers
in groups of 8-15



Foliage

Common Water Hyacinth

Eichhornia crassipes



Habitat:

Found in all types of freshwater bodies.
Grows anywhere it can avoid
freezing temperatures

Least Toxic Removal:

- For small infestations, remove plants by hand or with a rake
- Larger areas may need harvester machines

DO NOT PLANT

*Spreads by rhizomes and prolific seeds;
population may double in 6-18 days.*

Elephant Ear

Alocasia spp, Colocasia spp.



Description:

- Terrestrial and aquatic plant
- Green, heart-shaped leaves
- Berries are rare



TOXICITY WARNING

*Can cause irritation if ingested raw;
sap can irritate skin*

Elephant Ear

Alocasia spp, Colocasia spp.

Habitat:

Along creek banks and ponds

Least Toxic Removal:

- Use a shovel or grubbing tool to remove
- When removing, care must be taken to keep plant intact and remove all fragments to discourage spread

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Arrowhead
- Crinum Lily
- Tuckahoe

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by plant fragments

Eurasian Watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum



Description:

- Rooted, submersed, aquatic plant
- Grows in 3-10' of water
- Grayish-green leaves in whorls around stem
- Feathery appearance



Eurasian Watermifoil and Hydrilla

Eurasian Watermilfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum



Habitat:

Spreads into disturbed water areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- For small areas remove by hand or with rake
- For large areas, use mechanical harvester at the peak of biomass in early summer
- Better results with repeated harvesting
- All plant parts must be removed

DO NOT PLANT
Spread by plant fragments

Giant Cane

Arundo donax



Description:

- Perennial grass with woody canes
- Grows to 20'
- Alternate leaves with parallel veins



Plume-like flowers in late summer



Alternate leaves

Giant Cane

Arundo donax



Habitat:

Riparian and floodplain areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Hand pull small plants
- Hand-dig with a grubbing tool and remove all rootstalks

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Evergreen Yaupon
- Roughleaf Dogwood

DO NOT PLANT

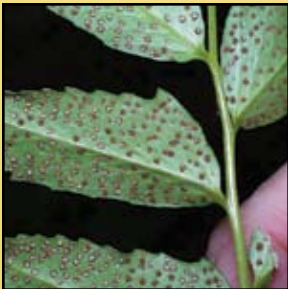
Spread by rhizomes (underground stems), plant fragments; produces no viable seed

Holly Fern
Cyrtomium falcatum



Description:

- Evergreen fern
- Grows to 3' tall
- Foliage resembles holly



Spores on bottom of leaf



New growth

Holly Fern
Cyrtomium falcatum



Habitat: Woodlands understory

Least Toxic Removal:

- Dig up plants, getting all of the root system

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- River Fern

DO NOT PLANT

near creeks and preserves.

Can be an appropriate plant in a managed yard

Hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata

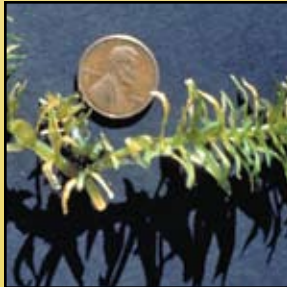


Description:

- Rooted, submersed aquatic plant
- Forms dense mats in water
- Grows in 1'-20' of water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " leaves grow in whorls
- Fine teeth on edge of leaves
- Tiny flowers



Foliage



Foliage

Hydrilla
Hydrilla verticillata



Habitat:

Fresh water bodies

Least Toxic Removal:

- Mechanical harvesters
- Herbivorous fish such as grass carp

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by root crowns and plant fragments

Japanese Honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica



Description:

- Semi-evergreen trailing or climbing vine
- Grows up to 80'
- Elongated, opposite leaves



Fragrant white flowers



Small black berries in spring through fall

TOXICITY WARNING
Toxic if eaten in large quantities

Japanese Honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica



Opposite leaves

Habitat:

Disturbed areas, roadsides, woodland edges and abandoned fields

Least Toxic Removal:

- Remove small plants by hand including roots
- Mowing may slow vegetative spread

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Coral Honeysuckle

DO NOT PLANT
Spread by seeds, runners and underground rhizomes

Johnson Grass

Sorghum halepense



Description:

- Warm season perennial weed
- Wide leaf blade with white strip down the center
- Can grow up to 6'
- Thick, creeping rhizomes (underground stems)



Young flower



Flower

Johnson Grass

Sorghum halepense



Habitat:

Roadsides and creeksides; tolerates all types of soils (sometimes brought in by soil from off site)

Least Toxic Removal:

- Manually remove as much of the root system as possible
- Persistent so may take several tries

DO NOT PLANT

This weed is spread by rhizomes (underground stems) and seeds

Kudzu

Pueraria lobata



Description:

- Deciduous vine
- Grows up to 100'
- Hairy stems
- Three oval to heart-shaped leaflets
- Very aggressive, can grow up to 1' per day



Purple pea-like clusters;
grape smell



Messy, green or tan
elongated fruit

Kudzu

Pueraria lobata



Habitat:

Roadsides, abandoned lots and along
stream banks

Removal:

- Call 974-2446 immediately if sighted

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Virginia Creeper
- Coral Vine

DO NOT PLANT

***Spread by seed, rooting at nodes and
root fragmentation***

Mimosa, Silk Tree

Albizia julibrissin



Description:

- Umbrella-shaped, often multi-trunked deciduous tree
- Grows to 40'
- 20" long leaves on alternate on stems
- Showy pink flowers bloom from spring to summer



Feathery foliage



Fruit ripens in fall

TOXICITY WARNING

Produces a neurotoxin in seed pods that can cause seizures and even death upon ingestion.

Pets especially susceptible

Mimosa, Silk Tree

Albizia julibrissin



Habitat:

Occurs on dry-to-wet sites and along streambanks

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Desert Willow

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds and root sprouts

Nandina
Nandina domestica



Description:

- Erect, evergreen shrub
- Grows up to 8' tall
- Glossy, bipinnately compound leaves
- Multiple stems that resemble bamboo



White to pinkish flowers
in terminal clusters



Red berries in fall
and winter

Nandina
Nandina domestica



Habitat:

Shady areas of forests and wooded areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Collect and destroy all fruit to prevent spreading
- Use a Weed Wrench™ to remove roots
- Replace with new varieties that don't produce seeds

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Non-berrying Nandinas
- Bush Germander
- Texas Sage
- Barbados Cherry

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by root sprouts and seeds

Paper Mulberry

Broussonetia papyrifera



Description:

- Deciduous tree with broad and spreading branches
- Grows to 50'
- Variable leaf shape
- Leaves fuzzy with serrated edges
- Milky white sap



Male flower in spring



Fruit in summer

Paper Mulberry

Broussonetia papyrifera

Habitat:

Disturbed areas, woodland edges, roadsides

Least Toxic Removal:

- Remove small plants by hand
- Use a Weed Wrench™ for 2.5" diameter trunks and smaller

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Cherry Laurel
- Texas Persimmon

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seed and root sprouts

Photinia
Photinia spp.



Description:

- Evergreen shrub
- Grows up to 20'
- Large, glossy, dark green foliage
- Showy white flowers



New growth is copper-
ish-red color



Fruit clusters in fall

Photinia
Photinia spp.



Habitat:

Woodlands

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Evergreen Sumac

DO NOT PLANT
Spread by seed

Poison Ivy
Toxicodendron radicans



Description:

- Deciduous perennial
- Young plants are herbaceous and can be 1'-2' tall
- Mature plants can be woody and cover hundreds of square feet
- Can grow to be vine-like, shrubby or a groundcover
- Vine attaches to any object that will support it



New poison ivy growth



Leaflets with lobe variation

Poison Ivy
Toxicodendron radicans



Habitat: Prefers fertile, well-drained soil; most common in shady areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Wear gloves, long sleeves and pants if removing plant (preventative blockers are also available pre-exposure)
- Pull small plants when soil is moist – grab plants through a plastic bag and turn inside out over the plant to avoid rash
- Smother small plants with mulch
- If vine is growing up a tree, sever vine at ground level
- Use a sharp shovel or grubbing tool to remove established plant roots
- Do not mow or string trim plants
- Bag or bury the vegetation that is removed (do not burn – may cause severe injury if inhaled)

DO NOT PLANT

Spreads by rhizomes and seeds

Pyracantha
Pyracantha spp.



Description:

- Evergreen shrub
- Grows to 20'
- Short, straight side stems end in a point creating a very painful thorn (sometimes called "fire thorn")



White flowers late spring through summer



Clusters of orange berries in fall through winter

Pyracantha
Pyracantha spp.



Habitat: Edge of wooded areas

Removal:

- Cutback to base of plant with loppers or a tree saw

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Evergreen Sumac
- Evergreen Yaupon

DO NOT PLANT

near creeks and preserves.

Can be an appropriate plant in a managed yard

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Pyracantha spp.



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- Evergreen Yaupon

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Running Bamboo

Phyllostachys aurea



Description:

- Evergreen
- Grows 16'-40' tall
- Long, pointed leaves
- Dense and aggressive - used for screening



Jointed stems



Leaf

Running Bamboo

Phyllostachys aurea



Habitat:

Old home sites and adjacent natural areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Cut plants as close to ground as possible
- Repeat as plants resprout for several growing seasons until energy reserves of rhizomes are exhausted
- If digging, remove all the roots
- A 3' deep barrier enclosing the plant prevents spread

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Evergreen Yaupon
- Bamboo Muhly

DO NOT PLANT

**Spread by aggressive rhizomes
(underground stems)**

Russian Olive
Eleagnus angustifolia



Description:

- Small, deciduous shrub or tree
- Grows up to 30'
- Lance-shaped leaves with greenish-gray color on top
- Thorny



Aromatic creamy yellow flowers in summer



Seeds in fall

Russian Olive
Eleagnus angustifolia



Habitat:

Along creeks and river bottoms

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Cherry Laurel
- Texas Persimmon

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds, root sprouts

Tamarisk, Salt Cedar

Tamarix spp.



Description:

- Small tree/ large shrub
- 10-15' tall
- Deciduous or evergreen
- Narrow, thin, grey /green alternate leaves
- Forms dense thickets



Scale-like leaves,
reddish-brown stems
and bark



Pink to white flowers
spring through summer

Tamarisk, Salt Cedar

Tamarix spp.



Habitat:

Riparian and wet areas

Least Toxic Removal:

- Hand pull plants under 1" diameter
- Large thickets can be bulldozed by root plowing
- Flooding will kill plants if root crowns are submerged for at least three months

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Arizona Cypress
- Bald Cypress

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds, vegetative roots

Tree of Heaven
Ailanthus altissima



Description:

- Deciduous tree
- Grows up to 80' tall
- Alternate leaves with 10-40 leaflets on a 1-3' stem
- Light gray stems and trunk



Cluster of wing-shaped samaras (fruit) in late summer to early spring



Flowers in spring

Tree of Heaven
Ailanthus altissima



Habitat: Along roads and right of ways; cannot tolerate flooding or extreme shade

Least Toxic Removal:

- Remove small plants by hand
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Must remove root system to prevent regrowth into dense thickets

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Chinquapin Oak
- Lacey Oak

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds, root and stump shoots

Vitex

Vitex agnus-castus



Description:

- Deciduous small tree or large shrub
- Grows to 20'
- Gray-green to dark-green, finger-like, aromatic leaflets in groups of 5-7



Fragrant, purple clusters of flowers in spring through late fall



Black fruit in fall

Vitex

Vitex agnus-castus

Habitat:

Beginning to invade nature preserves, found near water

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

DO NOT PLANT

*near creeks and preserves;
can be an appropriate plant in a managed yard*

Waxleaf Ligustrum

Ligustrum japonicum/Ligustrum lucidum



Description:

- Shrub to small tree
- Grows to 25'
- Thick, glossy, opposite leaves



Fragrant clusters of small, white flowers in spring through summer



Blue berries in late summer through fall

Waxleaf Ligustrum

Ligustrum japonicum/Ligustrum lucidum

Habitat:

Disturbed areas, lowland areas and floodplains

Least Toxic Removal:

- Pull plants by hand when young
- Use Weed Wrench™ for 2.5 diameter and smaller
- Cut trees to stumps – remove sprouts as they appear

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Texas Sage
- Barbados Cherry

DO NOT PLANT
Spread by seeds

White Mulberry

Morus alba



Description:

- Can grow to 70'
- Named for the color of its buds (fruit can be white, lavender or black)
- Variable leaf shapes
- Hybridizes with native red mulberry



Fruit in late summer through fall



Variable leaf shapes

White Mulberry

Morus alba



Habitat:

Disturbed areas, roadsides

Least Toxic Removal:

- Seedlings can be pulled
- Use a Weed Wrench™ to remove 2.5" diameter and smaller
- Cut tree and grind stump

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Cherry Laurel
- Texas Persimmon

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by seeds

Wisteria

Wisteria sinensis, *W. floribunda*



Description:

- Deciduous, woody vine
- Grows up to 70'
- Showy, abundant flowers



Fragrant white, pink, or lavender clusters of flowers in spring



Vines can strangle other plants

Wisteria

Wisteria sinensis, *W. floribunda*

Habitat:

Disturbed areas, roadsides, forest edges, ditches; escapes near original plantings; can persist in low light settings

Least Toxic Removal:

- Sever vine at base
- Remove vines that are coiling around trunks to prevent girdling.

Non-Invasive Alternatives:

- Passion Vine

DO NOT PLANT

Spread by vegetative growth of stems and stolons; seeds if conditions are favorable