



# NATIVE SPECIES

## FOR BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY

### HOW TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE HABITAT IN THE CITY

With a little bit of education and a lot of heart, we can achieve peaceful co-existence with wildlife throughout the urban forest, starting with our own backyards! We can create better wildlife habitat in the city by choosing to plant native species instead of non-native, invasive ones.

#### WHAT ARE INVASIVE SPECIES?

Invasive species are those that can proliferate in a new environment quickly and easily. When planted in our yards, they can spread beyond our property lines into parks and natural areas, and can:

- Out-compete native plant species
- Change the composition of the urban forest, limiting essential wildlife habitat
- Deteriorate our natural areas, as is happening to many of our local ravines

In spite of this, many invasive plants continue to be popular garden choices and are widely available for purchase.

#### HOW CAN I HELP?

You can restore the urban forest by choosing to plant native species in your yard and give local birds, pollinators and other wildlife more access to high quality food sources and better shelter. Avoid planting non-native, invasive species since they can escape your yard and wreak havoc in natural areas.

We've produced this educational factsheet to help you find suitable native alternatives to invasive species that are readily available. Use this resource as you plan your next gardening project and always make sure you're getting the plant you want! Tip: use the scientific name to avoid any confusion.

## NATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO INVASIVE SPECIES

#### TALL GROWING (15 FT OR MORE)

INVASIVE TO AVOID

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES



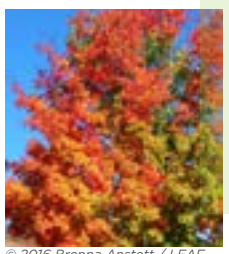
**Russian olive**  
*Elaeagnus angustifolia*  
Can choke out native plants in natural areas and prevent them from re-establishing.  
Also known as oleaster or silver berry.



**Norway maple**  
*Acer platanoides*  
Spreads readily and shallow roots out-compete surrounding plants for nutrients and water.  
Cultivars sold as Crimson King, Royal Red, Emerald Queen, columnar.



**Serviceberry**  
*Alemanchier laevis*  
Has fragrant white flowers that bloom in early spring, edible summer fruits and bright fall colour. Makes for a small and attractive tree.



**Sugar maple**  
*Acer saccharum*  
Commonly planted as a large-growing, shade tree. Fall colour ranges from yellow to red. The maple leaf on the Canadian flag is that of a sugar maple.

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## SMALL GROWING (2 FT - 5 FT)

INVASIVE TO AVOID



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### Multi-flora rose *Rosa multiflora*

Known to spread quickly, overtaking natural environments within just a few years. >>

Also known as baby, rambler, Japanese or seven-sister rose.



© 2010 Matt Lavin

### Winged euonymous *Eunonymus alatus*

Can spread widely and tolerates a wide variety of growing conditions, establishing in an area and outcompeting local plants. >>

Also known as burning bush.

## GROUNDCOVER AND GRASSES



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### Periwinkle *Vinca major, Vinca minor*

Easily spreads to natural areas. Leaves are toxic to many grazers. Commonly sold in garden centres. >>

Also known as small-leaf and big-leaf periwinkle.



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### Daylily *Hemerocallis fulva*

Spreads aggressively and displaces native species. Very difficult to remove or control. >>

Also known as ditch, common, tiger or orange daylily.



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### Miscanthus *Miscanthus sinensis*

Escapes gardens and enters natural lands. When dry, its dense thickets pose a fire hazard. >>

Also known as Chinese silver grass, eulalia, zebra grass.

### St. John's wort *Hypericum kalmianum*

Features striking yellow flowers that bloom in the summer. Tolerates a wide variety of growing conditions and attracts many native pollinators.



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### Northern wild raisin *Viburnum cassinoides*

Offers seasonal interest year round. Vibrant summer berries. Fall colours range from orange to purple.



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### Wild geranium *Geranium maculatum*

Grows in dense patches under partial sun to partial shade. Beautiful pink-lavender flowers bloom in late spring to early summer.



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### Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*

Eye-catching, bright yellow flowers bloom in the summer. Requires minimal care once established.



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### Switchgrass *Panicum virgatum*

Adapts to a variety of growing conditions. Stands tall throughout winter adding year-round interest.



© 2009 Matt Lavin

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

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This is not an extensive list, for more information refer to the Ontario Invasive Plant Council [Grow Me Instead](#) guide.

## TORONTO WILDLIFE CENTRE

If you find a sick, injured or orphaned wild animal, contact our Wildlife Emergency Hotline:

416-631-0662

And for more information, visit [www.torontowildlifecentre.com](http://www.torontowildlifecentre.com)

## ONTARIO POWER GENERATION BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

OPG is committed to being a leader and innovator in advancing biodiversity education and protection by working with partners across Ontario. Visit [www.opgbiodiversity.ca](http://www.opgbiodiversity.ca)

## LEAF

LEAF offers subsidized planting programs that make it easy to help wildlife in your yard. To learn more about the trees, shrubs and garden kits offered, visit [www.yourleaf.org](http://www.yourleaf.org)