

# Top 10 Invasives



**Baby's Breath** - A drought tolerant perennial that spreads only by seed. Its 4 metre long taproot allows the plant to grow to 1 metre in height with many branching stems, giving it a bushy, rounded appearance. The flowers are tiny, delicate, profuse, and white in colour. Baby's Breath is a problem as it out-competes native vegetation and reduces forage for wildlife and livestock.

**Try these instead:** White Flax (*Linum perenne* 'Diamond'), Hybrid Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* hybrids), or German Statice (*Goniolimon Tataricum*)

**Knotweed spp.** – Native to Asia, these bamboo-like plants have become a serious problem worldwide and are increasingly prevalent in our region. They rapidly invade wetland habitat, where they block sunlight, disturb nutrient cycling, displace native vegetation, and increase stream-bank erosion. There are four species in this family, including Japanese, Giant, Bohemian, and Himalayan Knotweed, that all share these very invasive characteristics.

**Try these instead:** Goats Beard (*Aruncus dioicus*), Black Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa* var. *melanocarpa*), and Oceanspray (*Halodiscus discolor*)



**Himalayan Balsam** – Native to India and the western Himalayas, Himalayan Balsam is grown for its pink to white, orchid-like flowers. This annual plant flourishes in wetland areas when it escapes cultivation and crowds out our native vegetation. These plants are reducing native plant populations, degrading wildlife habitat, and encouraging soil erosion within the region.

**Try these instead:** Pink Turtle (*Chelone lyonii*, *C. oblique*), Larkspur (*Delphinium parishii*, *D. elatum*), and Bleeding Heart (*Dicentra formosa*)

**Mountain Bluet** - An introduced ornamental from Europe in the knapweed family that is drought, shade, and sun tolerant. Mountain Bluet is a showy ornamental with vivid blue-purple flowers that spreads both by seed and root. This invasive plant crowds out native plants and reduces forage for wildlife and livestock.

**Try these instead:** Wild Bergamont (*Monarda fistulosa*), Large-leaved Lupine (*Lupinus ployphyllus*), and Clustered Bellflower (*Campanula glomerata*)



**Himalayan Blackberry** - A perennial, thorny bramble introduced from Europe to North America in the late 1800s for its tasty black fruit. Himalayan Blackberry is an aggressive species and easily spreads by stem layering and by seeds. Seeds are dispersed by birds and other animals. Spread of this plant has also been attributed to humans transplanting canes for its fruit. Once it is well established it out competes most other plants including native vegetation.

**Try these instead:** Thornless Blackberry, Marionberry and Tay berry (Rubus spp.)

*building communities together*

**English Ivy** - A widely planted evergreen vine, introduced as an ornamental into North America from Eurasia. As a garden escapee, this aggressive vine quickly spreads into neighbouring forests. It can completely engulf trees, shrubs, and forest floors because of its dense growth and abundant leaves; shading out most native plants. It can reach heights of 50 metres and to depths of 1 metre. English Ivy spreads by rhizomes, layering and seeds.



Try these instead: Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), Deer Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), and Barrwort (*Epimedium* spp.)



**Purple Loosestrife** - A terrestrial and aquatic perennial plant that is a vigorous competitor, quickly able to dominate a site and adapt to environmental changes. Purple Loosestrife has showy spikes of magenta coloured flowers atop a square stem, and spreads both by seed and by root. Loosestrife stands do not support our native wildlife populations, threatening their existence.

**Try these instead:** Tall Delphinium (*Delphinium elatum*), Spike Speedwell (*Veronica spicata*), and Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata*)

**Yellow Flag Iris** - A perennial, aquatic plant with flowers that are pale to dark yellow amid dark green, sword-like leaves. Yellow Flag Iris can spread by seed and by rhizomes. A typical infestation of this Iris can include up to several hundred flowering plants; all of which are connected through rhizomes. These infestations are choking out native plants, reducing habitat, and narrowing water-body channels. It is also toxic to humans and animals.



**Try these instead:** Cattails (*Typha latifolia*), Butter and Sugar Iris (*Iris 'Butter and Sugar*), and Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*)



**Flowering Rush** - A European native and one of the top five most invasive alien plant species in Canada due to the major ecological impacts it threatens within natural ecosystems. Flowering Rush is an aquatic perennial that can be distinguished by its leaves, which are triangular in cross-section. This pink to white flowered invasive plant forms dense mats that restrict light, dissolved gasses, and the nutrients available to our native aquatic plants.

**Try these instead:** Narrow-leaved Cotton Grass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Native Sedges (*Scirpus* spp.), and Western Blue Iris (*Iris missouriensis*)

**Common Periwinkle** - A perennial plant from Europe that has glossy, dark green leaves that are evergreen and violet-purple flowers. The plant roots along the stem to form large dense clumps and is popular as a ground cover in bare areas under trees in the garden. The aggressive vegetative spreading nature of periwinkle can cause it to smother other vegetation. If garden clippings escape private property boundaries, periwinkle can establish and take over native ecosystems.



Try these instead: Queen's Cup (*Clintonia uniflora*), False Lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum dilatatum*), and Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*, *Cornus suecica*, *Cornus unalaschkensis*)