



Tried and True Native Plants To Replace Invasive Plants

Best Bets
for Particular Uses
in the Mid-Atlantic

INVASIVE PLANT: English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)



One of the most popular ground covers in North America, this non-native climbing vine was introduced by early European colonists. Its vigorous growth creates an “ivy desert” as it chokes out other plants on the ground, and it poses a threat to both buildings and trees as it grows up vertical surfaces. The plant is reported as invasive throughout the Mid-Atlantic region, including Arlington and Alexandria.

Problems	English Ivy & Fragrant Sumac ‘Gro-Low’
Grows rampantly in urban areas and roadsides	
Suppresses native plants in forest understory	
Thick leaves reduce light to plants underneath	
Vines grow 90 feet up trunks of trees and spread over branches, blocking sunlight to foliage	
Abundant fruit dispersed by birds	
Spread inadvertently through disposal of yard waste as stem fragments can root easily	
Shallow roots not ideal for erosion control	
Harbors rats	
Desired Characteristics	
Woody and/or evergreen ground cover	
Native Alternatives	
(Replacement woody plants:)	
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> (Virginia Creeper)	
<i>Rhus aromatica</i> ‘Gro-Low’ (Fragrant Sumac)	
<i>Xanthoriza simplicissima</i> (Yellowroot)	
(Replacement evergreen plants:)	
<i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i> (Green and Gold)	
<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i> (Marginal Wood Fern)	
<i>Packera aurea</i> (Golden Ragwort)	
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i> (Christmas Fern)	
developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria	

Images by Elaine Mills, Arlington