



Tried and True Native Plants To Replace Invasive Plants

Best Bets: Plants
for Particular Uses
in the Mid-Atlantic

INVASIVE PLANT: Bamboo (*Bambusa*, *Phyllostachys*, and *Pseudosasa* spp.)



First introduced in 1882 as ornamentals and still favored for their screening capabilities, these fast-growing Asian grass species are now invasive throughout the Southeast and in Mid-Atlantic natural areas. Sprouts can grow 30 inches a day, roots can travel 20 feet away from the parent plant, and infestations can spread nearly 10 miles. Do not mistake *Arundinaria gigantea*, a native bamboo, for these exotic invaders.

Problems	Bamboo & Switchgrass
Perennial evergreens, hardy in variety of climates	
Dominate sites, creating a monoculture	
Displace native vegetation through crowding and shading, destroying healthy habitats	
No value to North American wildlife species	
Spread rapidly via underground rhizomes	
Can spread through transfer of soil with rhizomes still present	
Eliminate forest understory causing erosion	
Produce allelopathic compounds	
Harbor invasive mosquitoes and attracts roaches	
Leaf litter affects stream food webs	
Can cause property damage to sidewalks, driveways, pool liners, decks, and foundations	
Desired Characteristics	
Grasses provide vertical interest and screening	
Native Alternatives	
<i>Elymus hystrix</i> (Bottlebrush Grass)	
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> (Eastern Redcedar)	
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> (Switchgrass)	
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> (Little Bluestem)	
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> (Indian Grass)	
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Elaine Mills, Arlington, VA and Rockville, MD



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