

INVASIVE PLANTS IN THE WILD

A few examples of the problems caused by garden and pond plants that have become invasive



Garden escapes like montbretia crowd out other plants and threaten important habitats.

Some species spread disease. Rhododendron is a host of plant diseases which threaten native species including oak, beech and larch.



Aquatic plants such as floating pennywort clog waterways damaging the habitat, preventing boat use, and increasing the risk of flooding



Control can be costly. Water primrose is not yet widespread in Britain but will cost millions of pounds to manage if it spreads further, like it has in parts of Europe.



EXTRA TIPS FOR POND OR AQUARIUM PLANTS

When you buy a new plant remove the surface layer of compost from it and wash the plant in a bucket before you position it in your pond to remove any seeds or plant fragments.

Use this and any other waste water from your pond or aquarium on your lawn or to water plants in your garden, away from waterbodies (or drains that flow into them) as it could contain fragments of invasive plants.

If your pond is near a wetland or waterbody, avoid using plants which aren't locally native and if any invasive plants appear, remove them before they spread to the wild.

Use unwanted aquatic plants as mulch in dry borders, keeping away from any waterbodies or drains.

Protect your pond life by leaving any plants you've removed on the edge of the pond to drain for a few hours before disposing of them, to allow any wildlife to return to the water.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT INVASIVE PLANTS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP TO STOP THE SPREAD AT:

nonnativespecies.org/beplantwise



Protecting wildlife and the environment from invasive plants:

a guide for gardeners





YOUR PLANTS CAN BECOME INVASIVE IF THEY ESCAPE BEYOND YOUR GARDEN BORDER

Most of our gardens contain plants that are not native to Britain - they originally came from another part of the world. While non-native plants can help us to create beautiful ornamental displays to enjoy, if they escape into the wild some can become invasive.

Invasive plants can cause serious problems for the environment and the economy

Invasive plants can spread plant diseases and pests, and compete with other plants for space, light, nutrients and water. This can affect birds, butterflies and other insects which rely on them, and could threaten the survival of rare plant species. Once established they can be costly to control and can impact on our way of life, for example by damaging buildings, or clogging up waterways increasing the risk of flooding. Some can even be harmful to our health.

The damage caused by invasive plants can be irreversible and we don't always know which species will be a problem so it's really important not to plant anything in the wild, even plants that are native to other parts of Britain.

You can help to protect the environment for future generations to enjoy by preventing the spread of invasive plants.

BE PLANT WISE BY FOLLOWING OUR TIPS:



Choose the right plants for your garden, pond, aquarium and water features

Research plants before you buy them to make sure they are suitable for your needs, easy to dispose of, and won't be invasive. Garden centre staff may be able to help, or visit our website for resources.

Consider native plants, or choose non-invasive alternatives.

Never take plants from the wild, it can be illegal and may damage the environment.

Be careful when you share plants with friends and family, as you may accidentally pass on invasive plants, pests, or plant diseases. Did you know that it's illegal to sell or share some invasive plants? Find a list on our website.



Keep your plants in your garden, don't plant them, or allow them to grow, in the wild

Position new plants away from the edge of your garden so they can't 'jump the fence' and spread into the wild, and pull out any runners and seedlings that start to spread further.

If you have an invasive plant in your garden, deadhead seed heads and pods regularly and dispose of them carefully to stop them spreading on the wind.

Wash garden tools regularly if you use them in other people's gardens or for voluntary work in the countryside to keep them free of plant fragments, seeds, or plant diseases.



Dispose of unwanted plants, roots, weeds, seeds, and seed heads responsibly

Make sure nothing you remove from your garden, pond, or aquarium gets into the wild, you could be breaking the law if it does. Read more on restrictions around non-native plants on our website.

Compost your plants! Home composting is environmentally-friendly, and the compost will benefit your garden. Check our website first to see whether you have any invasive plants that can't be composted. Keep an eye out for any regrowth in your compost heap and make sure it is broken down properly before using it.

Alternatively, most garden plants can go in your council garden waste bin if you have one, but be aware that some invasive plants have extra controls around their disposal. Check our website and what your local council will accept first.

If you can't compost at home or have a plant that you can't put in your council garden waste bin you could dry plants and burn them, but check that your local council will allow this.



Find out more at nonnativespecies.org/beplantwise