

Plant Species to AVOID for Landscaping, Revegetation, and Restoration

Colorado Native Plant Society

Revised by the Horticulture and Restoration Committee, May, 2002

The plants listed below are invasive exotic species which threaten or potentially threaten natural areas, agricultural lands, and gardens. This is a working list of species which have escaped from landscaping, reclamation projects, and agricultural activity. All problem plants may not be included; contact the Colorado Dept. of Agriculture for more information (see references below). Some drought resistant, well adapted exotic plants suggested for landscaping survive successfully outside cultivation. If you are unsure about introducing a new plant into your garden or reclamation/restoration plans, maintain a conservative approach. Try to research a new plant thoroughly before using it, or omit it from your plans. While there are thousands of introduced plants which pose no threats, there are some that become invasive, displacing and outcompeting native vegetation, and cost land managers time and money to deal with. If you introduce a plant and notice it becoming aggressive and invasive, remove it and report your experience to us, your county extension agent, and the grower. If you see a plant for sale that is listed on the Colorado Noxious Weed List, please report it to the CO Dept. of Ag. (Jerry Cochran, Nursery Specialist; 303.239.4153). This list will be updated periodically as new information is received.

For more information, including a list of suggested native plants for horticultural use, and to contact us, please visit our website at www.conps.org.

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME *	NOX (CO)	NRCS	INV	RMNP	NE & GP	WISC	CA	CoNPS	CD	PCA	UM	COMMENTS
INVASIVE EXOTIC FORBS – Often found in seed mixes or nurseries													
Baby's breath	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>		X	X	X						X		
Bouncing bet, soapwort	<i>Saponaria officinalis (Lychnis saponaria)</i>	X	X			X		X	X				NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Native penstemon (<i>Penstemon spp.</i>); Rocky Mtn Beeplant (<i>Cleome serrulata</i>); Native white yarrow (<i>Achillea lanulosa</i>).
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	X	X			X			X		X		
Chinese clematis	<i>Clematis orientalis</i>	X	X						X				
Common yarrow (European variety)	<i>Achillea millefolium (European variety)</i>		X			X							Note: there is a European and a native variety - if in doubt, avoid this plant.
Cypress spurge	<i>Euphorbia cyparissias</i>	X	X	X			X		X		X		
Dalmation toadflax, butter & eggs	<i>Linaria dalmatica ssp. dalmatica</i>	X	X	X	X				X		X		Spreads aggressively by seeds and stolons. NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Golden Banner (<i>Thermopsis spp.</i>); Wallflower (<i>Erysimum asperum</i>); Scarlet Gilia (<i>Gilia aggregata</i>).
Dame's rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	X	X			X	X		X		X		NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Native blue columbine (<i>Aquilegia caerulea</i>); Harebells (<i>Campanula rotundifolia</i>).
Mayweed chamomile	<i>Anthemis cotula</i>		X			X							
Mediterranean sage	<i>Salvia aethiopsis</i>	X	X	X					X		X		Forms monoculture; winter tumbleweed. NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Pussytoes (<i>Antennaria spp.</i>); Native Sage (<i>Artemisia spp.</i>).
Mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X			X		

Myrtle spurge, Mercer's spurge	<i>Euphorbia myrsinites</i>	X	X						X			Escapes gardens; poisonous sap. NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Sulphur flower (<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>); Kinnikinnick (<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>).
Ox-eye daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> (<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>)	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	Spreads easily by seed.
Perennial sweet pea, perennial peavine	<i>Lathyrus latifolius</i>		X						X			Explosive seed pods, escapes cultivation. NATIVE ALTERNATIVE: Western Virgin's Bower (<i>Clematis ligusticifolia</i>).
Purple loosestrife, European wand loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i> , <i>L. virgatum</i>	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	Threatens cattail marshes & other wetlands; spreads by seed, can grow from small piece of stem. NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Fireweed (<i>Chamerion (Epilobium) daniesii</i>); Spotted gayfeather (<i>Liatris punctata</i>); Beebalm (<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>).
Scentless chamomile, wild chamomile, scentless mayweed	<i>Anthemis arvensis</i> , <i>Matricaria perforata</i> (<i>M. inodora</i>), <i>M. maritima</i> (<i>Tripleurospermum inodorum</i>)	X	X	X					X			
St. John's wort, Klamath weed	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Sulphur cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla recta</i>	X	X	X		X			X		X	
Sweet clover, white	<i>Melilotus alba</i>		X		X		X		X	X	X	Reclamation escapee.
Sweet clover, yellow	<i>Melilotus officianalis</i>				X	X	X		X	X	X	Reclamation escapee.
Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>	X	X	X					X		X	Used as medicinal herb; escapes & spreads by seeds and rootstalks.
Teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	X	X	X							X	
Yellow Toadflax, butter & eggs	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>	X	X	X	X	X			X			NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Golden Banner (<i>Thermopsis spp.</i>); Wallflower (<i>Erysimum asperum</i>); Scarlet Gilia (<i>Gilia aggregata</i>).
INVASIVE EXOTIC GRASSES												
Canada bluegrass	<i>Poa compressa</i>		X				X			X		
Creeping bentgrass	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> (<i>A. alba</i> , <i>A. gigantea</i> , <i>A. palustris</i>)			X	X	X					X	Extensively rhizomatous, highly competitive with native species. Noxious weed in VA.
Crested wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron desertorum</i> , <i>A. cristatum</i>							X	X			Forms monoculture.
Hard fescue or sheep fescue	<i>Festuca ovina var. ovina</i>									X	X	
Intermediate wheatgrass	<i>Agropyron intermedium</i>									X		Outcompetes native plants; Western wheatgrass sometimes substituted for this species in seed mixes.
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>		X		X	X	X			X	X	
Meadow fescue	<i>Festuca pratensis</i>									X	X	
Meadow foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>									X		
Orchardgrass	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>		X		X	X			X	X	X	

Quackgrass	<i>Agropyron repens (Elytrigia repens or Elymus repens)</i>		X	X	X	X	X				X	Very aggressive, highly competitive with native species.
Reed canary grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea (Phalarioides arundinacea)</i>		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	Replaces native species in riparian areas.
Ryegrass, Italian or annual ryegrass, common rye	<i>Lolium perenne, L. multiflorum</i>		X					X				
Smooth brome or Hungarian brome grass	<i>Bromopsis inermis (Bromus inermis)</i>				X	X	X		X	X	X	Outcompetes native species.
Tall fescue	<i>Festuca arundinacea (Lolium arundinaceum)</i>		X					X				
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>		X						X	X	X	
INVASIVE EXOTIC SHRUBS												
Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus frangula (Frangula alnus)</i>		X	X				X		X	X	
Scotch Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>		X	X				X	X		X	
INVASIVE EXOTIC TREES												
Russian olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Silver Buffaloberry (<i>Shepherdia argentea</i>); Cottonwoods (<i>Populus deltoides</i> or <i>P. angustifolia</i>).
Salt cedar, Tamarisk	<i>Tamarisk ramosissima (chinensis), T. parviflora</i>	X	X	X					X	X	X	Extremely aggressive; outcompetes native species, very little will grow under it. NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus spp.</i>); Leadplant (<i>Amorpha canescens, A. fruticosa</i>); Boulder Raspberry (<i>Oreobatus deliciousus</i>); Wax currant (<i>Ribes cereum</i>).
INVASIVE EXOTIC CONTAMINANTS that may be found in commercially-grown seed												
Downy brome, cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	X	X		X	X		X				Increases fire interval; spread over 1000's of acres of public lands.
Yellow starthistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	X		X				X				NOTE: 45 seeds of this allowed in any seed bought in WY. May be allowed in SD & KS seed too. Before purchasing seed grown out of state growers, have it tested for CO noxious weeds!

* Using Weber names; synonyms and closely related species names follow.

LEGEND

NOX --- Colorado Dept. of Agriculture state-designated noxious weed list, Eric Lane

NRCS --- Natural Resource Conservation Service's PLANTS database, Invasive and/or noxious weed list

INV --- USDA Agricultural Research Service's INVADERS database for ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY

RMNP --- Rutledge, et al., "An assessment of exotic plant species of Rocky Mtn National Park".

NE & GP - PLANTS database, "Invasive weeds of Nebraska and the Great Plains"

WISC --- PLANTS database, "Invasive weeds of Wisconsin, WI"

CA --- California Exotic Pest Plant Council, CalEPPC list, "Exotic pest plants of greatest ecological concern in California". October 19, 1999

CoNPS --- Colorado Native Plant Society, Boulder Chapter, 1995. "Plant species not to use in gardening, reclamation, and restoration" handout.

CD --- Craig Dremann, 1999. Survey of Forest Service Botanists in the West

PCA --- Plant Conservation Alliance, 2000. Invasive plants

UM --- University of Montana website

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