



Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

**Ahh – To Grow A Garden – So Get Up and Get Growing –Taylorsville City - Tree Of The Month Article – July 2010 - Invasive Trees, Shrubs, and Weeds** - For reference Taylorsville City is USDA Hardiness zone 7A. An invasive plant has the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside its natural range. A naturally aggressive plant may be especially invasive when it is introduced to a new habitat. An invasive species that colonizes a new area may gain an ecological edge since the insects, diseases, and foraging animals that naturally keep its growth in check in its native range are not present in its new habitat. Some invasive plants are worse than others. Many invasive plants continue to be admired by gardeners who may not be aware of their weedy nature. Others are recognized as weeds but property owners fail to do their part in preventing their spread. Some do not even become invasive until they are neglected for a long time. Invasive plants/weeds are not all equally invasive. Some only colonize small areas and do not do so aggressively. Others may spread and come to dominate large areas in just a few years. Below are some categories to illustrate degree of invasiveness. Part of this information is from the United States National Arboretum Society web page on invasive plants [www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/invasives.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/invasives.html), and part of the list is from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Noxious Weeds of Utah, [plants.usda.gov/java/noxious](http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious).

**Danger! Don't plant it!** Purple Loosestrife (Photo 1) has long been a prized perennial. Its pinkish-purple flowers appear over a long period in summer. The seeds of this plant easily wash into waterways, and can be carried in the mud on the feet of waterfowl. Stands of loosestrife spread exponentially in wetlands and along stream beds. This plant should be removed by hand only if it is very young. Attempts to dig it out usually backfire because purple loosestrife re-sprouts from root fragments; disturbing the soil just provides more room for it to spread. Cut established plants to the ground periodically to prevent flowering. Other invasive plants are Tartarian Honeysuckle (Photo 2), Russian Olive (Photo 3); Bittersweet Vine, Wisteria Vine, Ajuaga Vine, Barberry Bush, Burning Bush, Private, Japanese Knotweed, Tansy, Siberian Elm (Photo 4), and Sumac Shrubs are still available for planting even though they have become invasive over large areas. This category is threatening because gardeners who are unaware of problems with these plants may still be planting them in areas that have not yet been colonized. But sumac shrubs' foliage is truly one of the joys of autumn, and their seeds are a food source for wild birds in winter.

**Warning If You See It Remove It!** Tree-of-Heaven (Photo 5) is one of the few trees that can grow in abandoned alleys, gutters, and broken sidewalks, or just about anywhere that is not in shade. It grows very quickly, and competes aggressively for sunlight. Disturbed sites are often dominated by Tree-of-Heaven. Pull these seedlings whenever you see them; once they have grown for a few years they are extremely difficult to get rid of. Reducing the number of trees will reduce the yearly output of seeds. Other common weeds which are invasive plants are Multiflora Rosa Rugosa often called the wild rose (it has very aggressive runners like Morning Glory) (Photo 6). Garlic Mustard (Photo 7) is a cool-season biennial herb that ranges from 12 to 48 inches in height as an adult flowering plant. Leaves and stems emit the distinctive odor of onion or garlic when crushed (particularly in spring and early summer). Lesser Celandine, is a low-growing, hairless perennial plant, with fleshy dark green, heart-shaped leaves. The plant was introduced in North America is a persistent garden weed (Photo 8). Although these plants are not often planted intentionally in gardens or offered for sale, they have the ability to spread if not controlled.

**Caution: It Is Not a Problem If You Manage It Wisely.** English Ivy, is one of the most popular ground covers in North America. However, its potential for escape is notorious. Interestingly, English ivy only reaches maturity and goes to seed after it has grown up a vertical surface. If you are willing to prune it regularly to contain it, it does not pose a threat. English ivy is not a good choice, though, if you want a low maintenance garden. Some other invasive exotics aside from English Ivy that fit this category are Common Daylily, Butterfly Bush, Wintercreeper, and Lilyturf. Although these plants are invasive, they can still be enjoyed by gardeners who want to grow them if they are willing to devote the time and effort to careful stewardship to prevent their spread.

**Where Invasive Plants are a Problem.** Invasive plants disrupt many natural habitats. They are most threatening in ecosystems such as wetlands, sand dunes, fire prone areas, along roadway and waterways. Invasive plant species thrive where the continuity of a natural ecosystem is breached and are abundant on disturbed sites like construction areas and road cuts. Even foot traffic can create a temporary void that is quickly invaded—some national parks have restricted the areas where visitors are allowed to walk with the warning, "we can watch Purple Loosestrife grow from people's footsteps."



Photo 8

Photo 9

Photo 10

Photo 11

Photo 12

Photo 13

Photo 14

Photo 15

Photo 16

Photo 17



### Common Names of Other Invasive Utah Plants and Weeds.

**Canada, Musk, Nodding, Purple Star Thistle, Scotch Thistle, and Yellow Star Thistle**, a member of the sunflower family, a biennial/perennial with showy red-purple flowers, with sharply spiny stems, and reproduces from root buds or seeds (Photo 10).

**Clover**, is an aggressive perennial weed, but a little weed control know-how can you help clear it out of your lawn (Photo 22).

**Crabgrass**, are problems in lawns the seeds germinate in the late spring and early summer and out compete the domesticated lawn grasses and expand outward. In garden it can quickly out-compete desirable garden plants (Photo 20).

**Dandelion**, is a perennial with yellow flowers and a puff-ball seed head, very problematic for turf grass and lawns (Photo 18).

**Diffuse, Russian, and Spotted Knapweed**, are perennial/biennials 1 to 3 feet high, with very long tap roots that reproduces from seed and vegetative root buds (Photo 24 and 25).

**Downy Brome, June, or Cheat Grass**, is a small to medium-sized, compact, densely-tufted grass with narrow leaves (Photo 9).

**Dyer Wood**, is a biennial, or a short lived perennial, and is a member of the mustard family (Photo 26).

**Field Bindweed**, is a perennial weed that spreads roots buds as well seeds commonly called Morning Glory (Photo 21).

**Ground Ivy or Creeping Ivy**, is an herb used as a diuretic, astringent, tonic, gently stimulant, kidney diseases and indigestion. Landscapers usually consider it a lawn weed and try to get rid of it (Photo 23).

**Hairy Whitetop, Hoary Cress, Globe-Podded, Ball Cress, White-Top Lens, Peppergrass, or Pepperweed**, is a perennial that grows to 3 feet tall. Leaves are grayish-green, clasping, flowers are white with many stems from woody root crown (Photo 17).

**Houndstongue**, is a biennial that reproduces by seeds, stem are erect, stout, heavy, 1-1/2 to 3 feet tall (Photo 11).

**Hydrilla**, is a prolific, rapidly-growing submerged aquatic plant that can thrive in water from a few inches to 20 feet deep.

**Leafy Spurge**, is characterized by plants containing a white milky sap and flower parts in three's (Photo 12).

**Medusahead**, an aggressive, winter annual grass, is changing the ecology of western rangelands (Photo 14).

**Purple Loosestrife**, (see first page above).

**Purslane**, can be used in edible landscaping it is reported a culinary delight! However it is invasive plant with (Photo 19).

**Quackgrass**, is an undesirable cool season, perennial grass, reproduces by seed or underground rhizomes, & reaches 3 1/2' high.

**Russian Olive**, (see first page above).

**Giant Salvia**, is free floating aquatic fern and has three leaves, two leaves above water and the third is a submerged leaf.

**Salt Cedar (Tamarisk)**, comprises about 50 species of flowering shrubs native to drier areas of Eurasia and Africa (Photo 14).

**Sorghum or Johnson Grass**, is a tall, coarse, grass with stout rhizomes. It grows in dense clumps or nearly solid stands and can reach 8 feet.

**St. Johnswort**, is an erect, opposite-leaved perennial herb, ranging from 2 to 4 feet tall arising from a taproot (Photo 15).

**Dalmatian Toadflax and Yellow Toadflax**, are both escaped perennial ornamental plants native to the mediterian (Photo 17).