

The consequences of introduced invasive plants

Introduced invasive plants overtake and displace native plant species, threatening the diversity and abundance of native species. They disrupt the ecosystem by reducing the availability of essential plants to wildlife, limiting the movement of animals through a landscape, decreasing pollinator activity, and often contributing to wildfire fuel loads.

A large population of an invasive species starts from a very small number of individuals. It sounds dramatic, but it's true: a single plant dispersing seeds can quickly establish a population that could ultimately cost the state millions of dollars to address and devastate wildlife. The longer infestations are left unaddressed, the greater the damage and the greater the cost to manage them.

"Early detection and rapid response" is the most effective way to manage invasive species. If populations are detected early and removed before they are allowed to spread, eradication may be possible. Preventing invasive plants from establishing themselves is the easiest and cheapest approach: monitor for them regularly and remove them as soon as possible according to [Invasive Plant Council guidelines](#). Consider removing and or replacing the following invasive plant species if they occur your property.

COMMON INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY:

Invasive Trees

Common name	Scientific name
tree-of-heaven	Ailanthus altissima
Brazilian and Peruvian pepper tree	Schinus species
castor bean	Ricinus communis
tree tobacco	Nicotiana glauca
Mexican fan palm	Washingtonia robusta
saltcedar	Tamarix ramosissima
Russian olive	Elaeagnus angustifolia
ngaio tree	Myoporum laetum
black Acacia	Acacia melanoxylon
Canary Island date palm	Phoenix canariensis
blue gum	Eucalyptus globulus

Invasive Grasses

Common name	Scientific name
giant reed	Arundo donax
pampas grass	Cortaderia selloana and Cortaderia jubata
fountain grass	Pennisetum setaceum
Mexican feathergrass	Nassella tenuissima
feathertop	Pennisetum villosum
dwarf fountain grass	Pennisetum alopecuroides



Invasive Ground Covers

Common name	Scientific name
English ivy	Hedera helix
periwinkle	Vinca major
highway iceplant	Carpobrotus edulis

Invasive Shrubs

Common name	Scientific name
Italian buckthorn	Rhamnus alaternus
orange cotoneaster	Cotoneaster franchetii
English holly	Ilex aquifolium
glossy privet	Ligustrum lucidum
veil broom	Genista monospermabridal
French broom	Genista monspessulana
Portuguese broom	Cytisus striatus
Scotch broom	Cytisus scoparius
Spanish broom	Spartium junceum
Australian saltbush	Atriplex semibaccata

Other Invasive Plants

Common name	Scientific name
sea lavender	Limonium perezii
gazania	Gazania linearis
Mexican daisy	Erigeron karvinshianus
Pride-of-Madeira	Echium candicans
red valerian	Centranthus ruber
butterfly bush	Buddleja davidii
lantana	Lantana camara
pincushion flower	Scabiosa atropurpurea

Tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) is a non-native milkweed (with red/orange flowers) that needs to be cut back to the ground every October in order not to harm Western Monarch butterflies. **We advise against planting tropical milkweed and other non-native milkweeds. Instead, consider varieties native to our region:** [narrowleaf milkweed](#) (*Asclepias fascicularis*), [woollypod milkweed](#) (*Asclepias eriocarpa*), and [California milkweed](#) (*Asclepias californica*).

Good Grass Alternatives (Native to SoCal)

- [Deergrass](#) (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)
- [Purple three awn](#) (*Aristida purpurea*)
- [Purple needlegrass](#) (*Stipa pulchra*)
- [California fescue](#) (*Festuca californica*)

Resources:

- **Don't Plant a Pest!** – California Invasive Plant Council
<https://www.cal-ipc.org/solutions/prevention/landscaping/dpp/?type=trees>
- **Calflora visual inventory of invasive species:**
https://www.calflora.org/app/ipl?list_id=px7
- **CA Invasive Plant Council resources:** <https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/>
 - **Weed Control User Tool (WeedCUT):** <https://weedcut-new.ipm.ucanr.edu/#DST>
 - **Browse the Invasive Plant Inventory:**
<https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profiles/>
 - **Best Management Practices (PBMs) for non-chemical weed control:**
<https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/library/publications/non-chem/>
- **California Department of Fish & Wildlife, about invasive species:**
<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Invasives/About>
- **San Diego Weed Management Area:**
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/awm/ipm_sdwma.html