

Northeast



Scott LaFleur is the horticulture director at Garden in the Woods, a botanical garden and nursery in Framingham, Massachusetts.



ALTERNATIVE

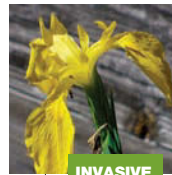
Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 2 to 8

SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and 1 foot wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; prefers rich soil with good water retention

It's no wonder that overpicking has made cardinal flower a rarity in some parts of the country. Its towering, late-summer blooms are irresistible, and their power to beckon hummingbirds is an added bonus. In the wild, this native grows near streams and likes its feet wet. When planted in moist, organic soil, cardinal flower will self-sow with vigor, freely sending up scarlet spires wherever it likes.



INVASIVE

Yellow flag iris
(*Iris pseud-acorus*)



ALTERNATIVE

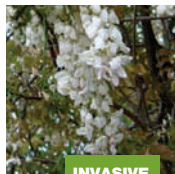
Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia tomentosa*)

ZONES: 5 to 8

SIZE: 20 to 30 feet tall and 5 to 10 feet wide

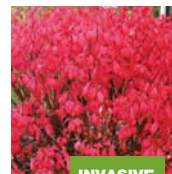
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; rich, well-drained soil

If you want a cold-hardy plant with a tropical look, Dutchman's pipe is an excellent choice. Low maintenance and fast growing, it will quickly cover a fence or trellis. In spring, this deciduous, woody vine sports pipe-shaped chartreuse flowers, from which the plant gets its name.



INVASIVE

Chinese wisteria
(*Wisteria sinensis*)



INVASIVE

Winged burning bush
(*Euonymus alatus*)



ALTERNATIVE

Iroquois Beauty™ black chokeberry
(*Aronia melanocarpa* 'Morton')

ZONES: 3 to 8

SIZE: 3 feet tall and 3 to 5 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moderately dry, well-drained soil

Cold hardy and disease resistant, the shapely Iroquois Beauty™ black chokeberry ushers in spring with a plethora of tiny white flowers, then closes out fall with a blaze of deep reddish orange foliage. The clusters of antioxidant-rich black berries that dangle from its branches in summer have a sour bite when eaten raw but are delicious in jams and juices.



INVASIVE

Purple loosestrife
(*Lythrum salicaria*)



ALTERNATIVE

Northern blazing star
(*Liatris scariosa*)

ZONES: 5 to 9

SIZE: 2 to 4 feet tall and 1 to 2 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; dry to moderately moist soil

The minute we set this plant out at the nursery, monarch butterflies flock to it—and, in turn, so do the customers. A drought-tolerant New England native, northern blazing star produces more flowering wands than purple loosestrife and boasts a more open, airy appearance.

Photos, except where noted: Jeff McMillan, courtesy of Almost Eden; author, Steven Ziglar, courtesy of New England Wild Flower Society; cardinal flower, Michelle Gervais; Dutchman's pipe, William Cullina, courtesy of New England Wild Flower Society; winged burning bush, www.millettephotomedia.com; black chokeberry, courtesy of Missouri Botanical Garden PlantFinder; purple loosestrife, Jennifer Benner; northern blazing star, courtesy of www.easylwildflower.com

Southeast



Jay Sifford is the owner of Sifford Garden Design in Charlotte, North Carolina.



ALTERNATIVE

'Okame' cherry (*Prunus* 'Okame')

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 6 to 9

SIZE: Up to 20 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; tolerant of various soil conditions

It is not difficult to find a plethora of rene-gade Bradford pears littering the shoulders of southern interstates. 'Okame' cherry has many of the attributes we love about Bradford pear without the liabilities. This cherry mimics the beautiful structure of Bradford pear, but it rarely breaks during ice storms. It shares the same early-spring bloom season with Bradford pear, with cheerful, delicate pink blossoms that are less susceptible to frost damage.



INVASIVE

Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana* cvs.)



ALTERNATIVE

'Morning Calm' trumpet vine (*Campsis grandiflora* 'Morning Calm')

ZONES: 6 to 9

SIZE: Climbing to 15 feet

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; well-drained soil

Here in the South, imported Chinese wisteria is everywhere except where you want it to stay. I came across 'Morning Calm' trumpet vine a year ago and fell in love. The flowers are large and flat compared to its cousins. It is a strong grower but not aggressive. It is also a favorite of hummingbirds as it blooms throughout the summer. It was introduced by the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh, North Carolina.



INVASIVE

Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*)



INVASIVE

Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*)



ALTERNATIVE

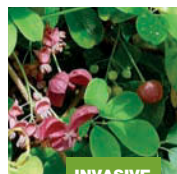
'Sunburst' honeylocust (*Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Sunburst')

ZONES: 5 to 9

SIZE: 40 feet tall and 35 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist to dry, well-drained soil

Mimosa is the quintessential southern tree, but where there is one, there will soon be hundreds. 'Sunburst' honeylocust is a great alternative. The foliage has the same fernlike appearance as the mimosa but is one notch above by emerging a brilliant yellow, fading to light green. This cultivar is thornless, seedless, deer resistant, and tolerant of urban pollution as well as salty coastal environments.



INVASIVE

Chocolate vine (*Akebia quinata*)



ALTERNATIVE

Magnolia vine (*Kadsura japonica* and cvs.)

ZONES: 7 to 11

SIZE: Climbing to 15 feet

CONDITIONS: Partial shade; well-drained soil

I searched for an evergreen vine that would climb a shady arbor in my garden without taking over like chocolate vine is known to do. Magnolia vine came to my rescue. It is adaptable to southeastern weather, has an evergreen twining habit, and is easily removed if necessary. It produces beautiful, small, lightly fragrant, white spring flowers. If you have both male and female vines, it will produce clusters of bright red berries in fall.

Midwest



Maria Zampini owns Lake County New Plants in Madison, Ohio.



ALTERNATIVE

Celebration® maple (*Acer × freemanii* 'Celzam')

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 4 to 9

SIZE: 45 to 50 feet tall and 20 to 25 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; moist, well-drained soil

Unlike a Norway maple, Celebration® maple is virtually seedless, meaning you can spend more time relaxing in your backyard instead of cleaning up those darn “bunny ears.” The inwardly cupped limbs and strong branch angles withstand snow loads and storms without shattering. And it has a fibrous root system, so you won’t have to deal with the root upheaval that can cause sidewalk or driveway damage. A good choice for urban gardens, Celebration® has dense green foliage that is disease resistant, looks good during high summer, and is tolerant of salt spray. Autumn color begins in midfall.



INVASIVE

Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)



ALTERNATIVE

Tiger Eyes® cutleaf sumac (*Rhus typhina* 'Bailtiger')

ZONES: 4 to 8

SIZE: 6 feet tall and 8 feet wide

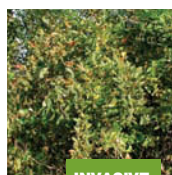
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, well-drained soil

Unlike other sumacs, Tiger Eyes® is a small, sterile cultivar that spreads slowly. It can be used as a single specimen or in masses, but in either scenario, this sumac provides a stunning silhouette. The branches angle up, while its leaves droop down, giving it an Asian look. Its new growth is chartreuse green and eventually matures to an almost neon lemon-lime color. Spectacular in fall, Tiger Eyes® cutleaf sumac turns a combination of yellow, orange, and scarlet. Adaptable to most soil types, it is also drought tolerant once established.



INVASIVE

Glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*)



INVASIVE

Common privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*)



ALTERNATIVE

Nordic™ inkberry (*Ilex glabra* 'Chamzin')

ZONES: 3 to 9

SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to full shade; moist, well-drained soil

This evergreen cultivar stands out from the species because of its compact habit and shiny, deep green foliage, which provides winter interest. Nordic™ inkberry is easily maintained and takes shearing well. Although similar in appearance to Japanese holly (*I. crenata**, Zones 5–7), this inkberry can take full sun or shade and has ironclad hardiness.



INVASIVE

Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)



ALTERNATIVE

Samaritan® Chinese dogwood (*Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'Samzam')

ZONES: 5 to 8

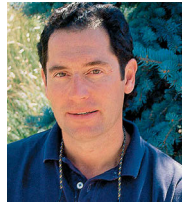
SIZE: 20 to 25 feet tall and 15 to 20 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, well-drained soil

Samaritan® is an extremely hardy variegated dogwood. The creamy-white-and-green leaves have wavy margins, won't scorch in the hot summer sun, and turn a radiant pinkish burgundy in fall. Its abundant, star-shaped flowers can put on a show for up to three weeks or more. Samaritan® Chinese dogwood also resists anthracnose, unlike other flowering dogwoods.

Photos, except where noted: courtesy of Maria Zampini; Norway maple, Paul Wray, Iowa State University/www.bugwood.org; glossy buckthorn, Robert H. Mohlenbrock/USDA-NRCS Plants Database; Tiger Eyes® cutleaf sumac, Michelle Gervais; common privet, Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut/www.bugwood.org; callery pear, Dan Tenaglia, MissouriPlants/www.bugwood.org

Southern Plains

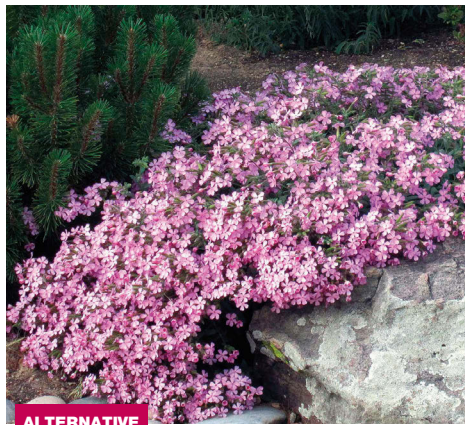


David Salman is founder and chief horticulturist of High Country Gardens in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



INVASIVE

Soapwort
(*Saponaria officinalis*)



ALTERNATIVE

'Max Frei' soapwort (*Saponaria* × *lempergii* 'Max Frei')

ZONES: 5 to 8

SIZE: 1 foot tall and 18 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; prefers moderately moist, average loam

A woefully underutilized perennial, 'Max Frei' soapwort is a standout in late summer. For well over a month, quarter-size pink flowers completely engulf the plant. This cascading low grower makes a well-behaved ground cover, demands no coddling, and goes untouched by pests and grazing deer.



INVASIVE

Russian olive
(*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)



ALTERNATIVE

Silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*)

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 3 to 6

SIZE: 8 to 15 feet tall and 6 to 10 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; any well-drained soil

A cousin of Russian olive, silver buffaloberry is a cold-hardy ornamental with silvery leaves and showy red berries (on female plants). Grow it as a large shrub, or prune the lower limbs to form a small multistemmed tree. Silver buffaloberry also makes an excellent habitat plant. Songbirds relish its tart fruit and nest in its thorny branches, where they're safe from house cats and other predators.



INVASIVE

Ox-eye daisy
(*Leucanthemum vulgare*)



ALTERNATIVE

'Lucky Star' coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* 'Lucky Star')

ZONES: 3 to 9

SIZE: 36 to 40 inches tall and 18 inches wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; prefers moderately moist, average loam

A new seed-grown, white-flowering cultivar, 'Lucky Star' coneflower is a sturdy, vigorous grower that blooms from midsummer to fall. Its nectar-rich flowers attract butterflies and bees in droves, making it a must for habitat gardens. After the flowers fade, leave them on the plant to attract seed-eating finches and other birds during the fall and winter months.



INVASIVE

Donkeytail spurge
(*Euphorbia myrsinites*)



ALTERNATIVE

'Blue Haze' spurge (*Euphorbia* 'Blue Haze')

ZONES: 5 to 10

SIZE: 18 inches tall and 2 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; infertile, dry to moderately moist, well-drained soil

There is, fortunately, a well-behaved alternative to the popular but highly invasive donkeytail spurge. Sterile and easy to grow, 'Blue Haze' spurge has blue-gray foliage year-round and delicate chartreuse flowers in summer. This deer-resistant variety is an excellent choice for hot, dry gardens and mixes easily with other flowering perennials, succulents, and cacti.

Mountain West



Michelle Provaznik is director of The Gardens on Spring Creek in Fort Collins, Colorado.



ALTERNATIVE

Hummingbird hyssop (*Agastache cana*)

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 5 to 9
SIZE: Up to 3 feet tall and 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

This tall, xeric perennial adds a deep rose color to the garden in the heat of summer. Spikes of tubular flowers attract many varieties of hummingbirds throughout summer, making this a must-have plant. Minimal maintenance is required. Do not cut hummingbird hyssop back in fall because leaving the foliage intact for winter allows it to catch leaves and other garden debris for insulation, helping the plant survive.



INVASIVE

Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)

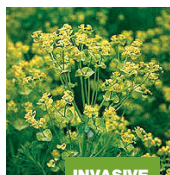


ALTERNATIVE

'David's Lavender' tall garden phlox (*Phlox paniculata* 'David's Lavender')

ZONES: 4 to 8
SIZE: 3 to 4 feet tall and 2 to 3 feet wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; moist, rich soil

A sport of the popular 'David' phlox (*P. paniculata* 'David'), Zones 4–8), this cultivar has large, fragrant blooms. Here in the Mountain West, phlox generally blooms from early summer through early fall. While mildew is not a serious issue in our dry Colorado climate, 'David's Lavender' is known for its mildew resistance. This plant is low maintenance, likes to be mulched, and requires moderate moisture.



INVASIVE

Cyprus spurge (*Euphorbia cyparissias*)



ALTERNATIVE

Creeping basket of gold (*Alyssum montanum* 'Mountain Gold')

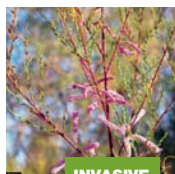
ZONES: 4 to 9
SIZE: 6 inches tall and up to 18 inches wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

Creeping basket of gold is a harbinger of springtime here in the Mountain West. This ground cover is blanketed in yellow-gold blossoms and is one of the earliest plants to bloom. Spring bulbs are a perfect complement. The only maintenance required is to shear off the flowers after blooming, leaving behind gray-green foliage that provides interest and color for the rest of the season.



INVASIVE

Dame's rocket (*Hesperus matronalis*)



INVASIVE

Salt cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*)



ALTERNATIVE

Apache plume (*Fallugia paradoxa*)

ZONES: 4 to 9
SIZE: 3 to 5 feet tall and wide
CONDITIONS: Full sun; well-drained soil

A western native shrub, apache plume provides continual interest throughout the growing season. In spring, small white blossoms appear and continue into summer. Shortly after, striking feathery pink seed heads form, giving the plant a plumelike appearance. Its finely textured foliage is semievergreen, though inconspicuous, in winter. This shrub is extremely drought tolerant and requires little maintenance if not overwatered.

Photos, except where noted: www.millettephotomedia.com; author, courtesy of Michelle Provaznik; purple loosestrife, Gary A. Monroe; hummingbird hyssop, Michelle Gervais; dame's rocket, James L. Reveal, Smithsonian Institution, Dept. of Systematic Biology-Botany; Cyprus spurge, William S. Justice, Smithsonian Institution, Dept. of Systematic Biology-Botany; salt cedar, Steven Perkins

Southern California



Penny Nyunt is a biologist for Las Pilitas Nursery in Santa Margarita, California.



ALTERNATIVE

'Bee's Bliss' creeping sage (*Salvia 'Bee's Bliss'*)

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 9 to 11

SIZE: 1 to 2 feet tall and spreading to 4 to 8 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; sandy or clay soil

'Bee's Bliss' creeping sage is a relatively low-growing, fast-spreading but non-aggressive silvery ground cover, which is also heat and drought tolerant. Hummingbirds love the pale purple flowers, while the plant's bitter taste and minty fragrance make it deer resistant. This aroma is best enjoyed when 'Bee's Bliss' is planted where passersby can brush it or the breeze can waft its scent along.



INVASIVE

Hottentot fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*)



ALTERNATIVE

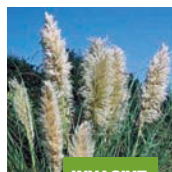
California morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia*)

ZONES: 7 to 10

SIZE: Spreading or climbing to 27 feet

CONDITIONS: Full sun with afternoon shade; clay or granitic-based soil

California morning glory is a lush evergreen vine, which will spread along the ground but often reaches its tendrils for something to climb upon. With minimal care, it can be trained along a fence to provide a privacy screen or on other garden structures as a decorative vine. In contrast to German ivy, which covers and smothers all vegetation in its path, the native California morning glory is sturdy and fast growing without being aggressive. It makes a lovely, well-mannered creeper with large, showy flowers.



INVASIVE

Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*)



ALTERNATIVE

Deer grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)

ZONES: 5 to 10

SIZE: 2 to 4 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; clay or sandy soil

Deer grass is a thick, clumping grass with arching leaves and large, upright, flowering stalks. After establishment, it needs minimal water; if planted in a low spot that retains moisture, it can survive on rainfall alone. Deer grass has enough presence to make a statement but, unlike pampas grass, is small and tidy enough to be easily maintained. Its leaves are also softer than the razor-sharp blades of pampas grass.



INVASIVE

German ivy (*Delairea odorata*)



INVASIVE

Silver wattle (*Acacia dealbata*)



ALTERNATIVE

Screwbean mesquite (*Prosopis pubescens*)

ZONES: 8 to 10

SIZE: 15 to 25 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun; tolerates most well-drained soils, even sandy or alkaline clay conditions

Screwbean mesquite, also called tornillo, is a small tree or large shrub bearing spiraled fruit and bright yellow flowers. This tree, a member of the legume family, also fixes nitrogen, adding fertility to the soil. The plant casts light shade beneath it, providing shelter for less-heat-tolerant perennials. Unlike silver wattle, screwbean mesquite does not reseed aggressively or displace other native species within its range.

Photos, except where noted: www.millettephotomedia.com; author, courtesy of Penny Nyunt; Hottentot fig, G. A. Cooper, Smithsonian Institution, Department of Systematic Biology-Botany; German ivy and pampas grass, Joseph M. DiTomaso, University of California-Davis/www.bugwood.org; silver wattle, Bruce Newhouse/www.bugwood.org; screwbean mesquite, courtesy of James M. Andre

Northwest



Linda R. McMahan is a horticulturist for the Oregon State University Extension Service in McMinnville, Oregon.



ALTERNATIVE

Meyer lilac (*Syringa meyeri*)

USDA HARDINESS ZONES: 4 to 7

SIZE: 6 feet tall and wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; average, well-drained soil

This species lilac is shorter and more rounded than many other lilacs, with foliage and flowers appearing even at ground level. It bears familiar fragrant, light lavender to purple blooms in late spring, attracting visiting bees and other insect pollinators. Meyer lilac is resistant to powdery mildew.



INVASIVE

Butterfly bush

(*Buddleia davidii* and cvs.)



ALTERNATIVE

Western red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *occidentalis*)

ZONES: 3 to 8

SIZE: Reaches up to 10 feet tall and 9 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun to partial shade; average to moist soil

Western red osier dogwood is a drought-tolerant Pacific Northwest native that performs well in a wide range of settings. Its large, arching branches form a vase shape, which may be maintained by removing larger branches from the base. White spring flowers on flat-topped inflorescences attract butterflies; white berries follow, favored by birds. Leaves turn shades of red and purple in autumn, while new red branches provide a stunning display in winter. This plant may spread by stolons.



INVASIVE

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*)



INVASIVE

Herb Robert

(*Geranium robertianum*)



ALTERNATIVE

Bloody cranesbill (*Geranium sanguineum* and cvs.)

ZONES: 3 to 8

SIZE: 12 to 18 inches tall, spreading to 18 inches

CONDITIONS: Partial shade; average, well-drained soil

Bloody cranesbill is a vigorous but compact herbaceous perennial with masses of attractive foliage and flowers. It grows in a spreading and mounding form and is often used as a ground cover. Summer flowers are pale pink to reddish purple.



INVASIVE

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)



ALTERNATIVE

Forsythia (*Forsythia* × *intermedia* cvs.)

ZONES: 6 to 9

SIZE: 8 to 10 feet tall and 10 to 12 feet wide

CONDITIONS: Full sun preferred but will tolerate partial shade; average, well-drained soil

Forsythia's brilliant yellow blossoms are a familiar sign of spring, while pale to deep green leaves adorn its branches throughout the rest of the season. After the leaves drop in autumn, the newer yellow-and-light-green branches provide winter interest. Forsythia naturally grows in a fountain shape; prune entire branches from the base to maintain this appearance.