Gardening green

California is a gardener’s dream. Our mild climate allows us to have four gardens—cherry blossoms in spring, a variety of Weinachtsrosen from plants from all over the world.

However, sometimes, our garden plants can jump to neighboring areas too quickly. Our native species plants display more species and natural habitats.

Gardening alternatives for invasive plants. (alternative name, genus, family, or species.)

Don’t plant a pest! Give them an inch and they’ll take an acre…

Groundcovers & Perennials

Don’t plant:

Suggested alternatives for invasive ornamental plants of the San Francisco Bay Area

Gardeners don’t invent invasive species intentionally. Like other plants, these ornamentals go where they are taken. However, many of these invasive ornamentals have gained popularity in California because they are easy to grow and maintain. Some of these plants may have invasive relatives, even in the same genus. California’s Statewide Invasive Species Council has recommended that many of these plants be used as landscape plant material.

Want more fast and easy care? Look for ornamental plant material that is already adapted to local conditions. Some of the invasive ornamentals have been recommended for their adaptability to local conditions. Care for these plants is also recommended for the control of weeds and diseases. California’s Statewide Invasive Species Council has recommended that many of these ornamentals be used as landscape plant material.

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shrubs

Don’t plant:

brown basket (Smilax breweri)  
(Thorny) root system that can invade urban plantings. It forms dense thickets along stream edges and roadsides.

Instead try:

Brazilian flame bush (Celtis brasiliensis)  
A small tree or shrub with leathery leaves similar to scarlet wisteria with brilliantly colored flowers that attract hummingbirds and pollinating butterflies.

Don’t plant:

ironwood (Lagerstroemia species)  
(Brilliant yellow flowers grace this deciduous shrub. Its leaves are resistant to hummingbirds.)

Instead try:

Shrub hypericum  
(Scotch, French, Spanish, Portuguese)  
Arching green stems and bright yellow flowers give this shrub a unique character that is irresistible to hummingbirds.

Don’t plant:

Japanese barberry  
(Garden barberry)  
Golden yellow flowers first appear in spring on this graceful deciduous shrub. The berries remain bright green in winter after leaves fall.

Instead try:

Cape thatching reed  
(Chondropetalum tectorum)  
This shrub produces a large bunchgrass. Grows up to six feet tall, producing large, striking, white flowers in summer.

Don’t plant:

pineapple guava  
(Coconut myrtus)  
A gorgeous evergreen shrub available in compact, shrub-like varieties that stay low and grow. It produces masses of beautiful white flowers, and produces, strawberry-like fruits.

Instead try:

Bigelow’s bear grass  
(Nolina bigelovii)  
This large, dependable, and showy ornamental grass has blue-gray foliage in the fall and winter. Has attractive border.

Don’t plant:

California native, evergreen shrub that is hardy enough to brighten red berried. Several compact varieties are available.

instead try:

Joyce  
(Potentilla fruticosa)  
A California native with attractive white flowers that give way to bright red berries. This evergreen shrub has a low growth habit of small, white, pinkish-white flowers and grows to bright red berries. Several compact varieties are available.

Don’t plant:

shipwrecked (Feijoa sellowiana)  
This large, dependable, and showy ornamental grass has blue-gray foliage in the spring. Instead try: A gorgeous white flower that gives way to bright red berries. This evergreen shrub has a low growth habit of small, white, pinkish-white flowers and grows to bright red berries. Several compact varieties are available.

Don’t plant:

Dr. Robert Thomas and Margaret Orr
1999 California Academy of Sciences

This shrub produces delicate white flowers and large clusters of small, white, pink, and red flowers that attract hummingbirds and pollinating butterflies.

Instead try:

winter jasmine  
(Gramineae family)  
Arching green stems and bright yellow flowers give this shrub a unique character that is irresistible to hummingbirds.

Don’t plant:

Lindheimer’s muhly grass  
(Nolina bigelovii)  
This large, dependable, and showy ornamental grass has blue-gray foliage in the spring. Instead try: A gorgeous white flower that gives way to bright red berries. This evergreen shrub has a low growth habit of small, white, pinkish-white flowers and grows to bright red berries. Several compact varieties are available.

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Feijoa sellowiana  
(Nolina bigelovii)  
This evergreen shrub has a low growth habit of small, white, pinkish-white flowers and grows to bright red berries. Several compact varieties are available.

Instead try:

sand Verbena officinalis  
(California native, evergreen shrub available in compact, shrub-like varieties that stay low and grow. It produces masses of beautiful white flowers, and produces, strawberry-like fruits.

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Instead try:

calamondin orange  
(Coconut myrtus)  
A natural hybrid between the longan and mangosteen. The fruit is fragrant, oval, and can be eaten fresh or dried, providing a low-maintenance shrub with bright orange fruits that make great marmalade.

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