

Invasive Plants

Do you enjoy the fragrance of a honeysuckle bush? Many of us do. Unfortunately, many of the plants we enjoy, and that are common to where we live (including honeysuckle), are actually invasive and do not belong in our area. These plants are called “invasive” because they have the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside their natural range. 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.

A naturally aggressive plant may be especially invasive when it is introduced to a new habitat. It is considered harmful because it frequently thrives at the expense of native species. A few of the more well known invasive plants include Japanese honeysuckle, kudzu, Scotch broom, tree-of-heaven, and the Russian olive tree.

While some invasive plants are worse than others, many 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 help prevent their spread. Some do not even become invasive until they are neglected for a long time. Invasive plants 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. There are dozens, if not hundreds, of invasive plants affecting all ecosystems, including wetlands, pastures, and woodlands. You can do your part by making sure not to plant or encourage invasive species on your property.



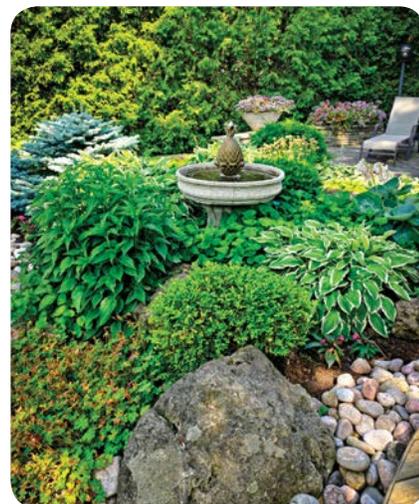
Water Features

Few sounds in nature are more relaxing than the sound of a babbling brook. For that reason many homeowners are making the decision to install a water feature in their yards. There are many water features to choose from, so it's important to do your research to see which one will complement your space best.



FOUNTAINS

Fountains come in many shapes and sizes. They also come in many different types of practical materials. Although fountains can be a great addition to your landscape, they shouldn't overpower your space. Use a fountain as an accent to your garden, yard or patio. You can even place them in an outdoor pond, but remember that bigger isn't always better in this case.



PONDS

Choose a location for your pond based on where it will get a good mix of sun and shade to ensure that the water stays clean and clear of algae. Next, decide on the size of your pond. Depending on the size, you also may want to aerate the pond to stave off bugs. A variety of water plants are available, and ornamental fish are a nice finishing touch.

WATERFALLS

Waterfalls come in all shapes and sizes so use your imagination. A waterfall that empties into a pond can require a fair amount of maintenance (cost), which may be why the pondless waterfall was developed. With a pondless waterfall, water cascades down something – rocks, for example, or a stone wall – and onto a bed of ornamental gravel.

When considering a water feature, choose wisely then relax and enjoy!

