

## PRESS RELEASE

Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

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### Plant Natives instead of Invasives!

For some states across the United States, spring is just around the corner. Green grass still will not be seen for some time in the Adirondacks, but when the snow does begin to melt and the gardening season begins, be sure to plant native plants instead of invasives. Even though invasive ornamentals grow quickly to establish beautiful garden arrangements, they are detrimental to our Adirondack ecosystem. Invaders may be easily maintained for the first few years, but they rapidly reproduce in great numbers, spreading uncontrollably and displacing native vegetation. Predators found in the historic range that keep plant populations in check are not established in the Adirondack mountains, further allowing these plants to over-run our native populations.

Two invasive plants people commonly purchase as ornamentals are Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife. Japanese Knotweed is planted as a hedge or ornamental screen because it is robust and reaches a height of 10 feet. Petite white flowers appear from August-September. This plant is deadly because a network of rhizomes spreads 50 feet throughout the soil, and when broken, new plants sprout. New populations are also established by fragmentation of broken stems and roots that are transported to and re-root in new locations. Early spring emergence gives Knotweed a jump-start on native vegetation. Overcrowding of Adirondack flora decreases biodiversity, wildlife habitat, and food for herbivores. Purple Loosestrife is a popular garden plant due to its breathtaking magenta flowers that bloom from July-September. This plant spreads via rhizomes, seeds, and plant fragmentation. Populations quickly reach astronomical numbers that out-compete native vegetation for water, sunlight, growing space, and soil nutrients.

Instead of planting invasives in your garden such as Garlic Mustard, Common Reed Grass, Japanese Knotweed, or Purple Loosestrife, look to native Adirondack plants and flowers to landscape your property with this spring. The benefits of planting natives are numerous. Native plants are often less expensive than non-natives. In addition, natives are easy to grow and require less upkeep than non-native plants because natives are adapted to the Adirondack climate. Indigenous plants do not need constant watering, mulching, or mowing and environmental pollution from lawn mowers, fertilizers, and pesticides is reduced. Wildlife forage and habitat are increased, and soil erosion is decreased. The Adirondack Park Agency has compiled an extensive list of natives that

are great alternatives for your garden:

[http://www.apa.state.ny.us/research/adk\\_native\\_plant\\_list.htm](http://www.apa.state.ny.us/research/adk_native_plant_list.htm)

A more extensive report that lists trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, graminoids, ferns, horsetails, and aquatics is available at

<http://www.apa.state.ny.us/Research/MasterNativeListByHabitAlphaByCommonName.pdf>

If non-native invasives are growing on your property, check out the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District's Invasive Species webpage at

[www.hamiltoncountyswcd.com](http://www.hamiltoncountyswcd.com) for management suggestions or log onto the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program website at <http://www.adkinvasives.com/>

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a variety of native seedlings, ferns, and wildflower seed mixes in the annual Tree and Shrub Sale. For more information, check out our website.

Photos:

Loosestrife.jpg: Purple Loosestrife flowers