

# Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife: Avoid decorating with invasive plants this holiday season

*Don't deck the halls with invasive species!*

Have you started decorating for the holidays? Avoid using invasive plants like oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose! Birds eat and carry away fruits from wreaths and garlands and can deposit still-viable seeds. Exotic, invasive plants can cause severe environmental damage and negatively impact native species and their habitats.

During holiday seasons, many people use plants to decorate their homes or businesses. Avoid using exotic, invasive plants such as Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in holiday decorations. Though these plants are attractive, using invasive plants in decorations can impact native species and habitat. Birds eat and carry away the fruits from wreaths and garlands and the digested but still-viable seeds sprout where deposited.

Exotic, invasive plants create severe environmental damage, invading open fields, forests, wetlands, meadows, and backyards, and crowding out native plants. Bittersweet can even kill mature trees through strangling. Both plants are extremely difficult to control; when cut off, the remaining plant segment in the ground will re-sprout. It is illegal to import or sell bittersweet and Multiflora rose in any form (plants or cuttings) in Massachusetts. Learn more about invasive plants in Massachusetts and how they threaten our native species and natural communities here. Those who wish to decorate for the holidays should consider alternatives like

native pines, spruces, hemlock, American holly, mountain laurel, fir, or winterberry holly.

You can learn more about invasive plants from our publication: "A Guide To Invasive Plants". In the Guide, each invasive plant description includes a photograph, the plant's regulatory status, key identification characteristics, habitats where the plant is likely to be found, types of threats the plant poses to native species and habitats, and its current distribution and place of origin.

To purchase a guide from MassWildlife, stop in the Field Headquarters office in Westborough during business hours or send in our publication order form.