

WHAT IS AN EXOTIC PLANT?

An exotic plant is one that is not native to our area, but which may survive and reproduce here, displacing native species and altering natural systems.

ARE ALL EXOTICS INVASIVE?

No, however, some can cause extreme damage, choking out native plants and trees, reducing the variety of wildlife in an area, and depleting water supplies.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

- Establish and maintain an adequate buffer zone of native vegetation around all waterbodies.
- Conserve or restore native emergent vegetation along the shoreline.
- Landscape with Florida native plants.
- Learn to recognize invasive exotic plants.
- Be careful when ordering plants online—some invasive exotics can be purchased!
- Eradicate all invasive exotic plants.
- Support programs that promote the efforts.

EXPAND YOUR EFFORTS AND EDUCATION:

- Inform others.
- Report sightings of invasive plants to your local agricultural agent or Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP/Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission Invasive Plant Management Section).
- Volunteer to help remove exotics from vulnerable natural areas.
- Check the following websites for photos and detailed information about exotic plants in Florida.
 - The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council: <http://www.fleppc.org/01list.htm>
 - IFAS: Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu>
 - FDEP's Bureau of Invasive Species: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec>
 - What Can I Do?: http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/environment/invasive_species.shtml

SOME LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH EXOTIC AND INVASIVE PLANTS IN WALTON COUNTY:



Walton County Government and the Coastal Dune Lakes Advisory Board: The CDLAB is comprised of residents of Walton County appointed by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners (BCC).
<http://co.walton.fl.us>



Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance: The Choctawhatchee Basin Alliance is an organization committed to sustaining and providing optimum utilization of the Choctawhatchee Basin watershed.
www.basinalliance.org



UF/IFAS Extension: Extension is a partnership between state, federal, and county governments to provide scientific knowledge and expertise to the public.
www.ifas.ufl.edu

Vegetation Management Guide

for Living and Building on the Coastal Dune Lakes

WALTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Knowing Your Environment

Native Plants

EVOLVED HERE AND
BELONG HERE.



Native plants evolved along with the rest of the native community—bugs, butterflies, fish, birds, mammals—and together they maintain a stable natural balance.

Coastal Dune lake wetland plants perform several important ecological functions, including:

- water storage
- water filtration
- food source for wildlife
- habitat for wildlife

Native plants:

- Saltbush
- Sawgrass
- Black needle rush
- Sand cordgrass
- Swamp rosemallow
- Marshhay cordgrass
- Duck potato



SALTBUSH



DUCK POTATOE

Invasive Plants

DISTURB THE
NATURAL BALANCE.

Why are invasive exotic plants bad?

- They compete with native plants for water, sunlight, nutrients, and space.
- They disrupt natural ecosystems by pushing out native plants and animals.
- They alter the food web by changing food availability for plant-dependent wildlife.

What are the characteristics of invasives?

- They tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions (soil type, water level fluctuations, temperature, acidity, and salinity).
- They reproduce early, often, in large numbers and in multiple ways.
- They grow rapidly.
- They resist management control efforts.

Invasive plants:

- Alligator weed
- Common reed
- Cattails
- Cogongrass
- Torpedograss
- Chinese tallow trees



CHINESE TALLOW



TORPEDO GRASS

Human Actions

CAN HURT OUR NATIVE
ECOSYSTEMS.



- Clearing and/or mowing all the way to the water's edge can lead to problems like shoreline erosion, nutrient loading from the stormwater runoff, and loss of habitat for critters that live along the water.
- Trash not properly discarded anywhere in the watershed can eventually litter our waterways where it is ugly, toxic, and difficult to remove.

