DIRTY DOZEN GARDEN PLANTS

Increasingly, the natural environment in and around Cairns is being invaded by exotic plants, many of which have escaped from urban gardens. These plants are outcompeting native vegetation, choking waterways and displacing native animals. The following twelve plants have been identified by Council botanists and bush regenerators as plants to avoid in your garden because of their potential to escape into the local environment.

**Shoe-button Ardisia**
*Ardisia elliptica* (also sold as *Ardisia humilis*)

Listed in the top 100 of the world’s worst invasive species, this common garden ornamental can be found in bushland across the region and is spread by fruit eating birds and dumped garden waste.

**Scarlet Passion Flower**
*Passiflora miniata* (also sold as *Passiflora coccinea*)

Like many other vines, this species can form rampant infestations within rainforests and associated ecosystems in the wet tropics region.

**Yellow Heliconia / Golden Torch**
*Heliconia psittacorum*

The golden torch or yellow heliconia is fast becoming a serious weed of waterways and damp locations in the wet tropics. Difficult to control once established in the environment.

GARDEN WASTE

Dumping your palm fronds, grass clippings and other garden waste over the back fence or onto nearby bushland or creek banks is not only illegal, it’s also one of the most common ways that invasive plants are spread from gardens into the local environment.

Invasive plants can dominate the native vegetation, alter habitat for native animals, reduce biodiversity and alter the visual character of the landscape.

Help stop the spread of invasive plants by treating garden waste on your own property or disposing via your (general waste) wheelie bin or a local green waste collection business.

HEALTH CHECK

Give your garden a biodiversity health check by:

**Removing** potentially invasive plants from your garden.

**Choosing** garden plants that are unlikely to become weeds in your area.

For more information visit:
**Golden Pothos**  
*Epipremnum pinnatum* cultivar *“Aureum”*  
A highly invasive species in the wet tropics, it is difficult to control and completely overgrows the forest floor as well as the trunks of trees, often killing them in the process.

**Glow Vine**  
*Saritaea magnifica*  
Native to South America, Glow Vine is regarded as an environmental weed in northern Queensland and is currently most troublesome in the Whitfield and Stratford areas.

**Alligator Flag Weed**  
*Thalia geniculata*  
Alligator flag weed is one of the greatest threats to Australia’s waterways, wetlands and floodplains and is a serious threat to wet tropic ecosystems.

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**Ant Tree**  
*Triplaris americana*  
Native to Central and South America, this popular garden ornamental is regarded as an emerging environmental weed in northern Queensland.

**Yellow Trumpet Vine**  
*Allamanda cathartica*  
Native to South America and popular in North Queensland gardens, the Yellow Trumpet Vine is one of a number of exotic ornamental vines that have become invasive in this region.

**Curtain Creeper**  
*Vernonia elaeagnifolia*  
Native to Burma, this widely cultivated garden ornamental can form rampant infestations within rainforests and associated ecosystems in the wet tropics.

**Coral Berry**  
*Ardisia crenata*  
Native to East Asia, the seeds of this hardy shrub are spread by birds. It can form dense thickets on the rainforest floor.

**Brazilian Joyweed**  
*Alternanthera brasiliana*  
Native to South America, this plant is commonly used as an edging plant and is regarded as an environmental weed in Queensland and the Northern Territory due to its ability to invade a variety of ecosystems from bushland to creek banks.

**Goosefoot**  
*Syngonium podophyllum*  
Native to Central America, this species is widely cultivated as a garden ornamental and indoor plant. Unfortunately it is also regarded as a weed in wet tropic ecosystems due to its invasive nature and ability to climb or creep.

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**Local Knowledge**  
Council’s **Land Management Officers** are an excellent resource for anyone wanting to improve the biodiversity values of their garden or property.

Call **07 4044 3044** for more information.