
Testimony in favor of S2353 banning the sale of Invasive Plants

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Date Wed 4/8/2026 2:34 PM

To SLegislation <slegislation@rilegislature.gov>; Sen. Britto, Robert <sen-britto@rilegislature.gov>

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Dear Committee Members,

First, I would like to thank my Senator, Britto, for being a cosponsor of the bill.

I am a lifelong gardener, Master Gardener, Certified Native Plant Horticulturist and Certified Coastal Invasive Species Manager and own a small business dedicated to designing environmentally responsible, beautiful gardens and landscapes. In short, I have pulled a lot of invasive plants and I have replaced many of them with attractive native plants that are good for wildlife and easier to maintain.

As someone who works, "in the field", I am aware of the need to have a wide variety of plants for landscape design. This bill would have negligible impact on that. Currently only 87 plants are on Rhode Island's current, non-regulatory list of invasive species. Many of these are so awful that no one would purposefully grow them (think Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, common reed or mugwort). Central Nurseries 2023 catalog list 411 plant varieties for sale. Of those, only 7 species were on the state list. That's less than two percent of the offerings. It is worth noting that there are good - native - alternatives for each of these plants.

- 1) Red Maple (the state tree) instead of Norway maple
- 2) Serviceberry instead of Callery pear
- 3) Ninebark instead of Barberry (in addition fo being invasive this plant attracts ticks and has horribly painful thorns)(also note that the variety's for sale at Central were sterile ones - botanists may disagree whether that is effective but kudos to the nursery industry for the attempt.
- 4) Inkberry or junipers instead of privet
- 5) Virginia rose instead of beach rose (note the native roses are sometimes hard to find. This is a good opportunity for growers)
- 6) Panic grass instead of Chinese silvergrass
- 7) Virginia creeper instead of English ivy (This plant too is hard to find in commerce. Another opportunity)

In the eight years that I have been in business I have seen a dramatic increase in the number of small local native plant growers and retail establishments. Let us support these efforts and nt the sale of invasive plants which destroy habitat and take over our gardens and landscapes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sally Johnson

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