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Green & Healthy Maine HOMES

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YEARS

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LOVE OF FINE
WOODWORKING

NATIVE
PLANT
SWAPS

PREP FOR
WHOLE-HOME
HEAT PUMPS

Display through February, 2024

\$6.95



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NATIVE SOLUTIONS for ECOLOGICAL OFFENDERS

BY KERRY LEWIS

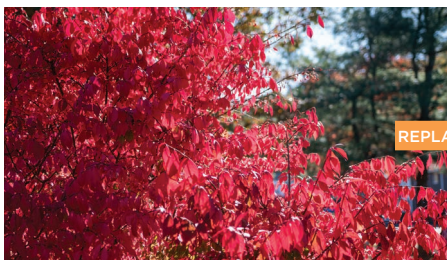
LIKE FASHION, plants fall in and out of favor depending on the viewpoint and knowledge of the gardener. Scores of plants have been introduced to our gardens with good intentions and have since proven themselves to be undesirable for a variety of reasons, ecological harm being a major factor.

Many New England gardens contain plant material that has been imported from abroad for purely aesthetic reasons, and which, having no natural predators here in the United States, is not set within a balanced ecosystem. Some of these plants, like Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), are now wreaking havoc in our woodland ecosystems. Although burning bush is now listed as an invasive species in over 20 states and banned in many others, its spread is exacerbated by bird consumption. Its seeds can easily have higher germination rates than some of our native groundcovers and shrubs, leaving a barren landscape with a much more limited pollinator or habitat value.

A review of the plants now banned for sale in Maine reveals a who's-who of species commonly found in our local gardens and popularized in suburban planting design: burning bush, barberry (*Berberis spp.*), border privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*), and bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), among others.

As ecological stewards, it is important to

Here are some of the biggest ecological offenders and suitable replacement species that offer rich, exciting seasonal display and have more pollinator/habitat value.



REPLACE WITH



EUONYMUS ALATUS (BURNING BUSH)

Traits: 10-15 inches high and wide, ornamental plant, bright red fall foliage, drought tolerant

- * *Amelanchier canadensis* Canadian Serviceberry
- * *Amelanchier* × *grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance' Serviceberry
- * *Aronia arbutifolia* 'Brilliantissima' Red Chokeberry
- * *Rhus typhina* Staghorn Sumac
- * *Vaccinium corymbosum* Highbush Blueberry
- * *Viburnum opulus var. americanum* American Cranberry Bush
- * *Viburnum dentatum* Arrowwood Viburnum



REPLACE WITH



BERBERIS SPP. (BARBERIES)

Traits: 5-7 inches high and wide, ornamental plant, fine foliage texture

- * *Aronia melanocarpa* Black Chokeberry
- * *Ceanothus americanus* New Jersey Tea
- * *Clethra alnifolia* 'Hummingbird' Summersweet
- * *Diervilla lonicera* 'Kodiak Orange' Kodiak Orange Bush Honeysuckle
- * *Fothergilla major* Large Fothergilla
- * *Ilex glabra* Inkberry Holly
- * *Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Little Devil' Little Devil Ninebark



REPLACE WITH



LIGUSTRUM OBTUSIFOLIUM (BORDER PRIVET)

Traits: 10 inches high and wide, excellent hedge, fine foliage texture

- * *Carpinus caroliniana* American Hornbeam
- * *Cornus sanguinea* Redtwig Dogwood
- * *Lindera benzoin* Spicebush
- * *Myrica pensylvanica* Bayberry
- * *Viburnum cassinoides* Witherod Viburnum
- * *Viburnum carlesii* Korean Spice Viburnum
- * *Viburnum trilobum* 'Compacta' American Cranberry Viburnum

be aware of how our planting choices affect our properties and the wider ecosystem we live in. It may be difficult to learn that some plant material we grew up admiring is now on the “bad list,” but there are more ecologically appropriate species that will achieve the same (or greater!) grandeur in seasonal display.

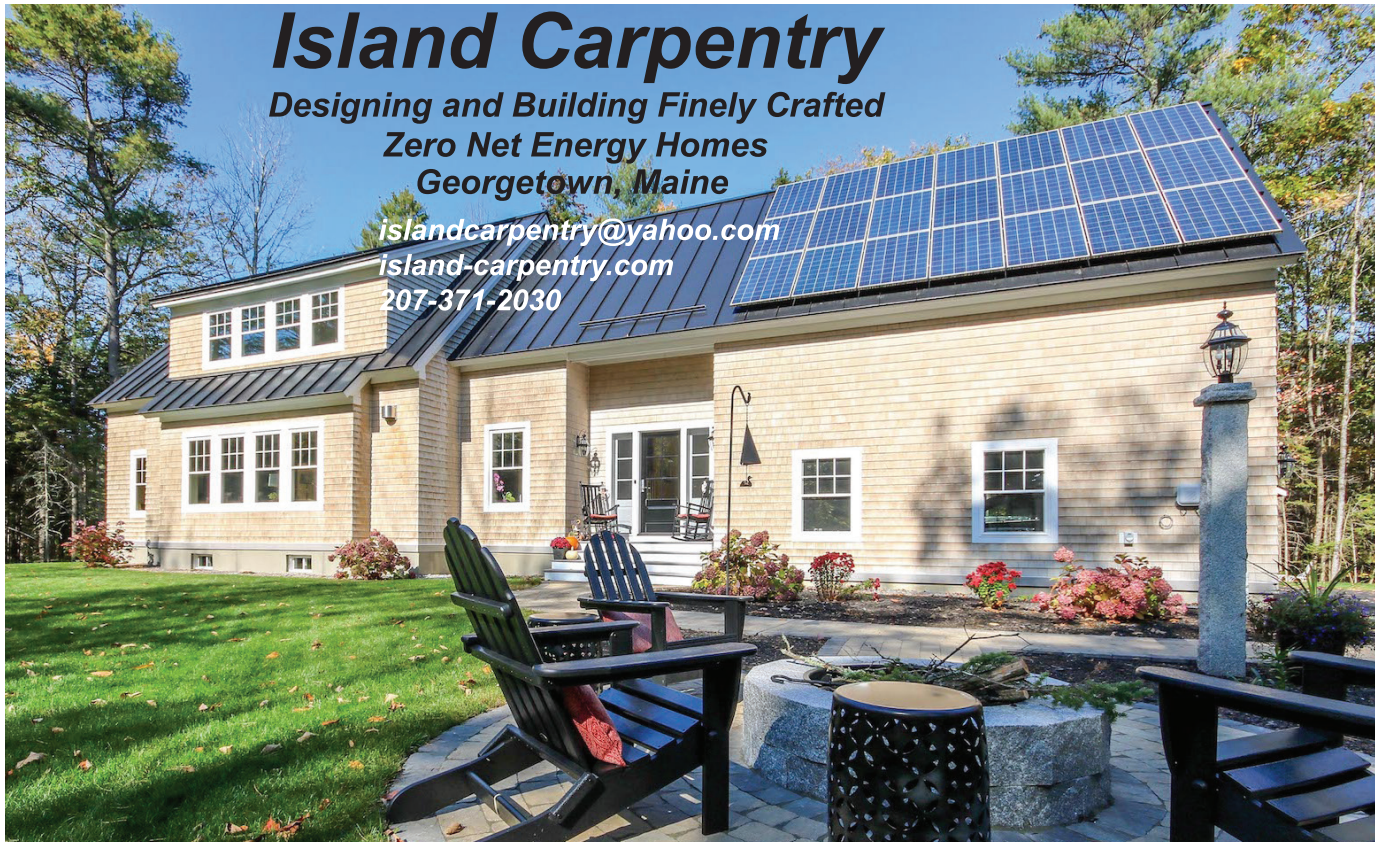
Plants that were previously considered good “co-habitators” can become problematic as our world changes and warms. Learning about various native plants and how they work in our landscapes can help you become a more informed consumer.

There are a myriad of choices out there for planting—why not choose ones that both add ecological benefits to the garden and look incredible? **G&HM**

For a list of invasive plants in Maine, please scan the QR code or visit the online version of this article at greenmainehomes.com/blog/native-swaps



Highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) is native to Maine and has brilliant red fall foliage, making it a strong alternative to invasive burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*).



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