

Statewide Survey Finds Invasive Plants Still Sold Widely in Virginia Retail Garden Centers

During the 2025 survey, volunteers visited 86 retail garden centers in 56 cities and found 49 invasive plant species being sold. The 2026 survey is underway.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, MT, UNITED STATES, June 18, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Virginia Invasive Plant Coalition today released the results of the first annual statewide survey of invasive plants for sale at retail garden centers, conducted from May 2-September 28, 2025. From Leesburg in northern Virginia to Virginia Beach on the Atlantic coast, and from Wise in the far southwest to Onancock on the Eastern Shore, volunteers visited garden centers in [56 communities](#) across the Commonwealth.



English ivy is still sold at retain garden centers in Virginia, despite being listed as on the Department of Conservation and Recreation Invasive Plant List.

"The survey results reinforce the need for more consumer education, as well as HB 109, which Governor Spanberger signed in April," said Rowena Zimmerman, director of Virginia Invasive

Plant Coalition. "Closing the invasive plant commercial viability loophole means that highly invasive plants like English Ivy and Japanese barberry could eventually be added to the [Virginia Noxious Weeds List](#) and prohibited from sale in the state."

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*Rowena Zimmerman, director
of the Virginia Invasive Plant
Coalition*

During the survey, volunteers made [128 visits to 86 retail garden centers](#) to search for invasive plants. They then compared plants' botanical names with the DCR list. If they noted an invasive plant, they filled out a survey form with the name of the center, date of visit, city, and species

found. Many also included photos.

The survey found an average of 6
invasive plant species per location:
55 species evaluated
49 invasive plant species found
5.46 invasive plant species found per
visit
6 average invasive plant species found
per location
19 highest number of invasive plant
species found at a single location

These Top 10 invasive plants were the
species most often found during the
visits:

butterfly bush
English ivy
nandina
periwinkle
Japanese barberry
moneywort
burning bush
greater periwinkle
Japanese spiraea
fountain grass

The second annual Virginia Retail Garden Center Invasive Plant Survey started in May and will continue until the end of September. The survey form works on a mobile phone and allows users to upload photographs of invasive plants for sale. Volunteers can find more information on the survey and also submit a survey online.

About Blue Ridge PRISM

Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) is a nonprofit environmental organization committed to improving the health of our natural world for future generations. Founded in 2014 as Virginia's first Cooperative Weed Management Area, PRISM is the statewide leader in education and training on invasive plants. Our programs help restore forests and watersheds, protect native wildlife and habitat, steward healthy landscapes and sustain the work through coalition building and effective policy. Learn more at blueridgeprism.org.

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