



FOR HEALTHY HOLIDAY DECORATIONS AVOID INVASIVE PLANTS

Framingham MA — Tom Smarr, Director of Horticulture at New England Wild Flower Society, the oldest plant conservation organization in America, reminds the public to **avoid Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in holiday decorations.** "Even though these plants may seem attractive, and some people would like to use them in dried flower arrangements, New England Wild Flower Society urges you to avoid them. Too often birds carry the fruits right off wreaths and garlands, or the fruits end up in landfills where they resprout. These plants create severe environmental damage in many parts of the country. They invade open fields, forests, wetlands, meadows, and even your own backyard, aggressively killing off whatever plants are nearby. Bittersweet can even kill mature trees. Both plants are extremely difficult to control-when they are cut off they quickly resprout." Even though you may still see them for sale, because they are so dangerous to natural habitats, it is now actually illegal to sell bittersweet and multiflora rose in any form (plants or prunings) in the state of Massachusetts. For the Massachusetts prohibited plant list visit http://www.mass.gov/agr/farmproducts/proposed_prohibited_plant_list_v12-12-05.htm. Find invasive plant lists of other states at the conservation pages at www.newenglandwild.org or at your local native plant society.

In the spirit of the holiday season, the New England Wild Flower Society urges you to select decorations that will consider the health of the earth as well as a pretty appearance. There are so many other beautiful choices that are fun to use and great for design, like winterberry, the evergreen American holly, pine and spruce boughs, cranberries, blueberry twigs, dried flower pods, dried ornamental grasses, pine cones, and more. For a list of suggestions, visit the FAQ page at the Society's website at www.newenglandwild.org.

The New England Wild Flower Society is headquartered at its botanical garden, Garden in the Woods-a 45-acre living museum with over 1500 kinds of native plants of America on display, 180 Hemenway Road, Framingham, Massachusetts. The Museum Store is open Thursday-Monday, 10-5 through December 24. Profits from all sales support plant conservation. Membership supports environmental stewardship and makes an earth-friendly gift and includes additional benefits like free admission to Garden in the Woods and discounts on native plants, books, and classes. . Purchase memberships online or at the Museum Store.

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Website www.newenglandwild.org.