

Invasive Plants for Basketry – Species List

Provided by Marcia Morse Mullins

Agave sisalana (Sisal Hemp)

Description: Large, stemless perennial succulent with spear-like leaves in a basal rosette. The leaves have sharp hooks or spines on the edges, and very sharp tips. Flowers are at the top of a long stalk and are branched, candelabra-like, from the main stalk.

Established Invasive: Australia, Fiji, Japan, Madagascar, Palau, South Africa, Tahiti, United States

Weaving: Make fiber for cordage; leaf tip spine can be used as a sewing needle

Akebia quinata (Chocolate Vine, Fiveleaf Akebia)

Description: Twining vine or vigorous groundcover with slender, rounded stems that are green when young and brown at maturity. The palmate leaves alternate along the stem and are divided into five leaflets, the small stems of which meet at a central juncture. Leaflets are generally long, oval in shape, 3-7 cm long, with a purplish tinge that becomes blue-green at maturity.

Established Invasive: United Kingdom, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining

Arundo donax (Giant Reed)

Description: Very tall bamboo-like perennial grass with large, spreading clumps of thick culms to 6 m tall. The leaves look like those of a corn plant. Their margins are sharp to the touch and can cut careless hands. The inflorescence plume stands above the foliage. Giant reed spreads from thick, knobby rhizomes. Once established, it tends to form large, continuous, clonal root masses, sometimes covering several acres.

Established Invasive: Australia, Bermuda, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Haiti, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Samoa, South Africa, Spain, Tonga, United States

Weaving: Culms can be split for plaiting, ribs, or twining; leaves for cordage

Collecting note: Wear gloves – sharp leaf margins. Will populate from small sections of root

Bambusa vulgaris (Bamboo)

Description: A tree-like perennial grass that forms dense stands of cylindrical, jointed woody stems up to 20 m in height with leafy branches at nodes and narrow lanceolate leaves

Established Invasive: Cook Islands, Fiji, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, United States, US Virgin Islands

Weaving: Culms can be split for plaiting, twining & ribbed baskets

Collecting note: Young shoots contain taxiphyllin, an enzyme inhibitor; do not ingest

Celastrus orbiculatus (Oriental Bittersweet)

Description: A deciduous, woody, perennial vine with glossy, rounded, finely toothed leaves arranged alternately along the stem. The fruit capsules are three-valved with each valve containing one or two brown seeds completely enclosed in a fleshy red fruit. Upon ripening, the yellow outer covering splits open to reveal the red fruits.

Established Invasive: Canada, New Zealand, Panama, Poland, Sweden, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining, random weave & ribbed baskets

Clematis terniflora (Japanese Clematis)

Description: A semi-evergreen climber or groundcover with compound, opposite leaves. Flowers are star shaped and highly fragrant.

Established Invasive: United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining & random weave

Clematis vitalba (Evergreen Clematis)

Description: A semi-evergreen climber or groundcover with compound, opposite leaves. Flowers are white and feathery.

Established Invasive: Canada, New Zealand, Poland, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining & random weave

Cyperus rotundus (Purple Nutsedge)

Description: A smooth, erect, perennial weed with an extensive subterranean tuber system. Purple nutsedge appears grass like, but its stems are triangular in cross-section. It has fibrous roots that branch prolifically, rhizomes, tubers, bulbs, and inflorescences that consist of irregular compound umbels. Its leaves are mostly basal and linear in shape with a prominent mid-rib.

Established Invasive: Global distribution. Native range undetermined.

Weaving: Use stems and leaves for coiling, cordage, & twining

Collecting note: Do not dig roots or collect when seed heads are present

Hedera helix (English Ivy)

Description: Evergreen climbing vine with dark green, waxy leaves arranged alternately along the stem. The juvenile plant climbs by means of adventitious roots; the mature form does not climb.

Established Invasive: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Georgia, New Zealand, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining

Imperata cylindrical (Cogongrass)

Description: A stemless erect perennial grass, growing in loose to compact tufts with slender flat linear-lanceolate leaves arising from dense rhizomes. The leaves have prominent white midribs that are slightly off center. The leaves have sharp serrated edges and contain silica.

Established Invasive: Australia, Benin, Chile, Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, United States

Weaving: Use leaves for cordage & coiling

Collecting note: Wear gloves – leaf edges are serrated. Do not cut when seed heads are present.

Iris pseudacorus (Yellow Flag Iris)

Description: Herbaceous perennial with flat, erect and linear sword-like with a raised midrib. The dark to blue-green blades are 25-90 cm long and have sharply pointed tips. Flowers are pale to bright yellow and 7-9 cm wide. The large seed pod is 3-sided and angular and turns from glossy green to brown as it ripens. Each pod contains dozens of seeds densely arranged in 3 rows. Roots are 10-30 cm in length, and the fleshy rhizomes are 1-4 cm in diameter.

Established Invasive: Canada, New Zealand, United States

Weaving: Use leaves for cordage & coiling

Lonicera japonica (Japanese Honeysuckle)

Description: Woody perennial, evergreen to semi-evergreen vine that can be found either trailing or climbing to over 24 m in length. Leaves are opposite, oval and 2.5-6 cm long. Margins are usually smoothed but young leaves may be lobed or toothed. Flowers are showy, fragrant, tubular, and whitish-pink, in the axils of the leaves.

Established Invasive: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, France, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Portugal, Puerto Rico, United Kingdom, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining, random weave, ribbed baskets

Melia azedarach (Chinaberry)

Description: Fast-growing deciduous tree that reaches 15 m tall with a 6 m diameter canopy. The tree is often made of several smaller trunks because it is able to readily sprout from the roots. Leaf scars from dropped leaves are triangular and noticeable. The leaves are alternate, bi-pinnately compound, and emit a musky odor when crushed.

Established Invasive: Argentina, Bolivia, Cook Islands, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Mexico, Micronesia, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Pitcairn, South Africa, Swaziland, Tonga, United States, Uruguay, US Virgin Islands

Weaving: Use sucker branches for rims & handles (trim with drawknife instead of splitting)

Pueraria montana var lobata (Kudzu)

Description: a climbing, deciduous vine capable of reaching lengths of over 30 m in a single season. Its fleshy tap roots can reach 17 cm in width and grow to 3 m deep. Leaves are alternate and compound with three lobed leaflets. Flowers are purple clusters in the axels of the leaves. Seeds are contained in a 7 cm long seed pod.

Established Invasive: American Samoa, Europe, Fiji, French Polynesia, Italy, Mediterranean area, Mexico, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Samoa, Tonga, United States

Weaving: Use runners for twining, random weave & ribbed baskets; use bark for cordage

Collecting note: New plants can emerge from stem cuttings

Rubus discolor (Himalayan blackberry)

Description: Perennial bramble with stems that can sometimes reach 3 m in height. Leaves are mostly 5-foliolate and bright green with hooked prickles on the leaf stems. Flowers are white to rose-colored with broad petals. The fruits mature from red to shiny black and succulent.

Established Invasive: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, United States

Weaving: Use canes for twining

Collecting note: Wear leather gloves; remove thorns with knife or glove

Salix cinerea (Pussy willow)

Description: Small shrub. Branches spread to form a broad, rounded or flattened crown. The leaves are shiny on the upper surface and covered with soft grey hairs underneath. Distinctive catkins appear in advance of the leaves and are cylindrical.

Established Invasive: Australia, New Zealand

Weaving: Use bark for cordage. Rods can be used as straight ribs; this species is not as flexible as English willow.

Trachycarpus fortunei (Hemp palm, Windmill palm)

Description: Evergreen palm with large fan-shaped leaves. The trunk is straight, solitary and fibrous, and dead leaves hang from the top forming a skirt. Male flowers (yellow) and female flowers (greenish) grow on separate plants on large, branched and drooping spikes, followed by fruit that ripens to from green to blue-black.

Established Invasive: Australia, France, Japan, New Zealand,

Weaving: Use leaf and leaf sheath fiber for cordage

Typha latifolia (Broadleaf cattail, Common cattail)

Description: Leaves are strap-like and stiff; rounded on back; flat and D shaped. Leaves are straight in the bottom half but twisted and spiral in the top. Leaves are thick and pale grayish-green in color. Female fruiting spikes are pale green when in flower, drying to brownish, later blackish brown or reddish brown in fruit.

Established Invasive: New Zealand

Weaving: Use leaves for plaiting, twining, cordage, braiding, coiling, and chair seating

Vinca Major (Bigleaf periwinkle, Large periwinkle)

Description: Perennial evergreen herb with erect flowering stems and trailing non-flowering stems that roots at the node. The stems contain a milky latex and shiny, dark green leaves that are opposite, round ovate, and pinnately veined. The flowers are blue to violet, 2-5 cm diameter and made up of five equally sized petals.

Established Invasive: Australia, Canada, Cyprus, New Zealand, United States

Weaving: Use for random weave & twining in small baskets, best used as accents

Wisteria floribunda (Japanese Wisteria)

Description: Perennial vine that can live for 50 years or more and can grow up to 38 cm in diameter. Leaves are alternate and pinnately compound, up to 30 cm long and consist of 13-19 leaflets. Blue-violet flowers hang in clusters that sometimes exceed 40 cm in length. Seedpods are 10-15cm in length, hairy, brown, narrow at the base, and constricted between seeds. *W. floribunda* twines clockwise around host plants.

Established Invasive: United States

Weaving use: Runners for twining, splint, hoops, & ribs; twisted older runners for handles; bark for cordage, coiling & stitching

Resources:

Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council – www.fleppc.org

Global Invasive Species Database – www.iucn.org/gisd/