

THE COMPARISON OF INVASIVE AND NON-INVASIVE WOODY ORNAMENTALS
PLANTED IN SOUTH-EASTERN AUSTRALIA

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Abstract. Over the last two hundred years, around 7,500 woody ornamental species have been introduced to, or redistributed around south-eastern Australia. Of these about 5% have been able to establish away from original plantings. Many have spread so successfully that millions of dollars is spent on their control, and their introduction to south-eastern Australia, cursed as a lack of foresight. Are there then characteristics which can identify the invasive woody species of the last two centuries from the non-invasive majority, so that it is possible to predict the weeds of the third century of European settlement?

The three groups of characteristics which may influence invasiveness are:

1. Cultural. Time over which, and amount that, a species have been planted. Among the 80 woody species invasive around Canberra, for example, are larger than expected numbers of species which have been planted for longer than 60 years, or in relatively high numbers, or both.
2. Inherent attributes. Characteristics possessed by the plants themselves, such as dispersal or reproduction mechanisms.
3. Environmental suitability. Invasive species tend to come from particular environments and/or from environments similar to that of south-eastern Australia. These environments can be measured by such factors as climate, soil or vegetation type.

Profiles of invasive and non-invasive species will be presented in light of these groups of characteristics and the interrelationship between them.