

BEST PRACTICES



Butterfly Bush: A Beautiful Nuisance

Butterfly bush (*Buddleia*) may look innocent, but it has become an invasive plant and is posing a very real threat to fish and wildlife habitat. Butterfly bush grows quickly and can produce as many as 40,000 tiny seeds per single flowerhead, which spread by wind and water. With a 30-year lifespan and rapid reproduction cycle, this non-native plant out-competes native plants and trees.

While some butterflies may get nectar from the plant, the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board found that it is rarely used by butterflies as a host plant for laying eggs. Recently, it was found that butterfly bush in the Nisqually watershed displaces native willow, a species which is crucial for native butterfly reproduction and larval survival.

What can you do if you have butterfly bush?

Remove the butterfly bush and replant the area with a non-invasive native plant. Make sure to bag butterfly bush in a black plastic bag and place in the landfill to prevent seed dispersion. Do NOT place in your compost or yardwaste bin.

For a list of plants that attract butterflies in various life stages, go to: www.wdfw.wa.gov/living/butterflies.

References:

- *Thurston County's Guide to Noxious Weeds*: www.co.thurston.wa.us/tcweeds
- *GardenWise—Non-invasive Plants for Your Garden*: www.nwcb.wa.gov

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