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Sacred Bamboo

A BEAUTIFUL BUT HARMFUL PLANT

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Sacred Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*), native to eastern Asia, has been a popular ornamental plant in U.S. gardens since the early 1800s. With striking bamboo-like foliage that turns crimson in the fall and vibrant red berries, it's easy to see why it was embraced as a landscaping favorite. However, beneath the ornamental charm, *Nandina* has become a highly invasive species—especially in the southeastern U.S., where it threatens local ecosystems and wildlife.

Nandina can quickly escape yards and gardens and spread into the wild, thriving in both sunny areas and shaded forest edges. It can grow up to 8 feet tall and produces clusters of bright red berries from September to April, which attract birds that spread the seeds far and wide. In addition to seed dispersal, *Nandina* also spreads through underground rhizomes, sending out new shoots and forming dense thickets.

These dense patches block sunlight, choke out native plants, and disrupt entire ecosystems, making it a major threat to local biodiversity.

One of the most alarming aspects of Sacred Bamboo is its toxicity. While the red berries are attractive, they are poisonous to humans, pets, birds and other wildlife species, adding another layer of danger to this invasive plant.

If you have Sacred Bamboo in your yard, it's important to prevent its spread. For removal, smaller plants can be pulled by hand when the soil is moist. The red berries should be cut, bagged and disposed of properly. Larger plants require digging up the entire root system, including the underground rhizomes, to prevent regrowth. If using herbicide, cut the stem as close to the ground as possible and immediately treat the stump with a high-concentration glyphosate solution. Herbicide treatment is most effective in late summer or early fall.

By removing Sacred Bamboo from your yard and choosing native plants, you can help protect our local ecosystems and your feathered friends!



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