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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Petition Urges Home Depot to Stop Selling Invasive Plants**

*Social Media Unites Over 5,000 Homeowners and Gardeners Demanding Change*

**McLean, VA – June 29** – Today, a Change.org [petition](#) launched by a northern Virginia resident reached 5,300 signatures asking Home Depot to end the sale of invasive plants in the company’s garden centers and online. The online petition gathered over 5,000 signatures in its first nine days, with outreach support from the [Blue Ridge Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management](#) (Blue Ridge PRISM), the [Urban Forest Alliance](#) (UFA), and [Plant NOVA Natives](#).

“The response has been overwhelming,” said petition author Lauren Taylor. “Clearly this has struck a chord, and people are willing to say enough is enough. One commenter said it best: ‘Home Depot should not profit from destroying our native ecosystems and biodiversity.’”

Jesse Buff, author of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network’s [Invasive Vines Assessment](#), said, “The climate impact of continuing to sell invasive vines that infest our forests and kill our native trees is almost incalculable. In our Takoma Park community we identified over 5,000 trees at risk of dying in the next five years. Yet Home Depot and other garden centers continue selling English ivy, even when it's officially listed as invasive in 16 states. It's completely unethical — retailers can and should do something about this.”

Ms. Taylor, a volunteer with both the UFA and the [Fairfax County Invasive Management Area Program](#), said she was prompted to launch the petition after the disappointing results of last year’s [Virginia Invasive Species Working Group](#), commissioned by the Virginia legislature to study “measures to reduce or eliminate the sale and use of invasive plant species in the Commonwealth.”

The working group’s [final report](#) produced no tangible results to help remove the dozens of invasive species that are still being sold by nurseries, big box stores and online retailers.

On a recent visit to the Home Depot garden center in Hybla Valley, Ms. Taylor documented eight invasive species for sale, three of which are on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation [Invasive Plant Species List](#) — including Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Japanese spirea (*Spiraea japonica*) and Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*).

Ms. Taylor also found at least 35 invasive species listed for sale on the Home Depot website.

“Landowners are frustrated. Farmers are frustrated. Volunteers are frustrated,” said Elizabeth Mizell, Program Director for Blue Ridge PRISM. “There isn’t enough time, money and energy to eradicate all of these invasive plants that have escaped people’s gardens and are hurting our farms, our national parks and our economy. To walk into a Home Depot nursery and see these invasive plants still being sold today is just adding insult to injury.”

Margaret Fisher, one of the organizers of Plant NOVA Native's volunteer [Tree Rescuers](#) program, shared the petition on the organization’s Facebook page and said, “We are so tired of seeing one park after another overrun by Japanese Barberry, Privet, Chinese Silvergrass, etc., etc.!”

“Home Depot [agreed](#) to stop selling invasive plants in California in 2015. They even boast about their commitment to the environment on their corporate website,” Ms. Taylor added. “So why are they still selling invasive plants in other states? I want as many people as possible to [sign the petition](#) and tell them to stop.”

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