Some Plants You Might Want to Think Twice about Growing in Your Coastal Oregon Garden

Some shrubs are very susceptible to our local fungus diseases which thrive in our moist, cool, and moderate climate. Examples of these diseases include: black spot, rust, powdery mildew, Phytophthora root rot, Verticillium wilt, and Anthracnose. Infected plants may have disfigured foliage, experience leaf drop, and generally don't look attractive. Some of these diseases are lethal and some are only cosmetic in nature.

Many roses (especially hybrid teas). (More disease- and deer-resistant choices are shrub roses and rugosa roses and their hybrids,) Photinia (red-tip), Indian hawthorn (Raphiolepis), many dogwoods, and some flowering currants.

Some flowering plants require more sunlight or heat than we have on the coast. They may grow well, but fail to bloom as they should. They do better farther inland. Depending on their normal season of bloom, this failure may be caused by lack of summer heat, lack of winter chill, or both.

Flowering dogwoods, Daphne odora, many lilacs, some early-blooming viburnums, Camellia sasanqua cultivars, winter honeysuckle (Lonicera fragrantissima), "Pee-Gee" hydrangea (H. paniculata grandiflora)

Junipers are susceptible to a tip blight that causes branches to brown and die back, and also succumb to root rot if drainage is less than perfect. They are best used in open exposures on dry, sandy soils or on banks. THEY ARE ALSO DAMAGED BY SALTY WINDS.

Large-leaved Rhododendrons will burn in salty winds. They do fine with some shelter from ocean winds and decent soil with adequate summer moisture. Alternatives are smaller-leaved species rhododendrons, evergreen azaleas, or Pieris cultivars.

Maples of all kinds have tender leaves that wind burn. The fine cut-leaf Japanese maples are the most sensitive of all. Better choices are the palmate varieties. Provide wind protection.

Besides the official and semi-official noxious weeds (English ivy, butterfly bush, Pampas grass), some plants grow TOO well and are best left out of the
coastal landscape, unless you take measures ahead of time to control their spread. Also, think of your neighbors and the environment: don’t just toss them in the vacant lot next door or over the cliff...they won’t die and will go on unchecked.

Calla lily (Zantedeschia aethipica) - common white calla reproduces by hundreds of tiny rhizome offshoots that can NEVER all be dug out, nor do they die no matter how diligently their tops are weeded out!

Common orange montbretia (Crocosmia) - will overrun a border and the corms are difficult to eradicate.

Orange Peruvian lily (Alstroemeria aurea) - reproduces by invasive deep rhizomes as well as seed; hybrids are clumping and NOT invasive.

Blue Lyme grass (Leymus (Elymus) arenarius) - beautiful and closely related to the native beach grass, EXCEPT this one is a rampant thug in the border and it produces LOTS of viable seed.

Japanese anemone (Anemone X hybrida cultivars) - a beautiful and long-lived perennial, but in good moisture-retentive soil it SPREADS like wildfire.

Allium triquetum, and A. moly - the first is a local thug, a white flowered (three cornered leek) allium that LOVES it here. You will NEVER get rid of it. The second “increases rapidly and readily naturalizes in light woodlands”.

Iris pseudacorus (yellow “flag” iris) - this plant loves the wet! It is crowding out our native iris in the wetlands. There are other hybrid cultivars that are sterile.

Flowering quince (Chaenomeles spp.) - Be careful, they will engulf your house, your kids, and the car! And they are thorny! The hybrids have more manners.

Ribbon Grass (Phalaris arundinacea picta) - a clumping grass with longitudinal white stripes on green, that spreads aggressively and indefinitely by underground runners. DON’T DO IT!

Bamboo - if you must have it, CHOOSE A CLUMPER, NOT A RUNNER! Even a clumper needs to be contained. See the Sunset Western Garden Book, 2007 Edition, pp. 212-217 for LOTS of information on bamboos,