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***AVOID DECORATING WITH INVASIVE PLANTS!***

During holiday seasons, many people use plant material they have gathered from their yard or neighborhood to decorate their houses or businesses. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) and the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) highly recommend that people avoid using exotic, invasive plants such as Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) and Multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) in holiday decorations. Though these plants are attractive, it is best to not use them. Birds eat the fruits from wreaths and garlands and the digested but still-viable seeds sprout where deposited. Exotic, invasive plants create severe environmental damage, invading open fields, forests, wetlands, meadows, and backyards, and crowding out native plants. Bittersweet can grow over and even kill mature trees through strangling them. These invasive plants are extremely difficult to control: when cut off, the remaining plant segment in the ground will re-sprout. It is illegal to import or sell Oriental bittersweet and Multiflora rose in any form (e.g. plants, cuttings, or wreaths) in Massachusetts.

Home and business property gardeners, garden club members, nursery staff, landscapers and conservationists can learn more about invasive plants from DFW's **A Guide To Invasive Plants**. In the Guide, each invasive plant description includes a photograph, the plant's regulatory status, key identification characteristics, habitats where the plant is likely to be found, type of threat the plant poses to native species and their habitats, and its current distribution and place of origin. Similar plant species are also briefly described to aid in plant identification. The Guide includes definitions of three categories of invasiveness, brief explanations of how invasive plants are introduced and spread, explanations of why they are a problem, how to learn more about controlling invasive plants, and the state regulations regarding their importation, sale and propagation. Useful websites on invasive plants are also referenced.

To purchase a guide, stop in the Field Headquarters office in West Boylston (note new address) during business hours or send a request to "Invasive Plant Guide," DFW Field HQ, NHESP, 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230, West Boylston, MA, 01583, and include a check for \$5 (per copy) payable to: Comm. of Mass.--NHESP. Sorry, but DFW does not accept credit cards. Learn more about invasive plants from DFW's Natural Heritage webpage at:  
[www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/invasives/invasive\\_species.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/conservation/invasives/invasive_species.htm).