Thousands of plants have been introduced to the United States from other parts of the world. Some have come here accidentally in seed stock, while others were brought here intentionally for horticultural use. A small number of these introduced plants have gotten a little too comfortable in their new environment. Because they have no native predators and produce a lot of fruit and seed that are efficiently dispersed, they are invading natural areas. The aggressiveness of these invasive plants affects natural areas and wildlife by decreasing biodiversity, competing with native and rare plants and eliminating wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Invasive

*Agopodium podagraria* (bishop's goutweed)

*Agopodium podagraria* is an herbaceous perennial that has made itself comfortable in the Midwest and Northeast regions of the country since the mid 1800s. Native to Eurasia, it is an important member of European plant communities, most commonly growing in deciduous woodlands, grasslands and riparian zones, according to the U.S. Forest Service. Historically it was used medicinally to treat gout and arthritis. In North America, *A. podagraria* has proven to be adaptable to a wide range of soils. Possibly brought to North America accidentally in seed stock, while others were brought here intentionally for horticultural use. A small number of these introduced plants have gotten a little too comfortable in their new environment. Because they have no native predators and produce a lot of fruit and seed that are efficiently dispersed, they are invading natural areas. The aggressiveness of these invasive plants affects natural areas and wildlife by decreasing biodiversity, competing with native and rare plants and eliminating wildlife habitat and food sources.

It’s aggressive and persistent, and there are plenty of good alternatives we can recommend that won’t get out of hand,” Tubesing said. You plant to fill a garden bed, but it’s not going to stop at the edge of that garden bed, as that means you have make an effort to keep it in bounds.”

**The Alternatives**

### Zizia aurea (golden Alexander)

Like *Agopodium podagraria*, *Zizia aurea* is a member of the carrot family. A perennial that can grow up to two feet tall, *Z. aurea* has radiant yellow flowers that look similar in structure to *A. podagraria* and bloom in May and throughout June. As temperatures rise in the summer and early fall, *Z. aurea’s* foliage and seed pods turn slightly purple to create a dynamic garden scene. Its native range extends from eastern Canada down to the southern United States. Despite its extensive range, *Z. aurea* requires moist soil and full sun, according to the Missouri Botanical Garden, and it is recommended for planting in rain gardens or along stream banks.

*Z. aurea* greatly benefits local wildlife. The shallow, miniature flowers are the perfect pollen baskets for insect pollinators with short mouthparts such as bees and small butterflies. According to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, *Z. aurea* is also a larval host for the striking black swallowtail butterfly, which eats its foliage as a caterpillar and enjoys the pollen and nectar as an adult. Plant *Z. aurea* in your yard and prepared to be visually inspired.

### Anemone canadensis (Canada anemone)

If you’re looking for a native ground cover species that is also great to look at, *Anemone canadensis* is a herbaceous perennial that makes a perfect ground cover. *A. canadensis* has deeply furrowed foliage that is uniquely shaped with individual white flowers that bloom from April through June, according to the Missouri Botanical Garden. At The Holden Arboretum, you will find examples of it in the Helen S. Layer Rhododendron Garden.

Not only does *A. canadensis* reproduce through seed production, but it also reproduces utilizing underground rhizomes. This plant’s quick rhizome activity is what makes this plant a fabulous choice for ground cover, but, this can also be a drawback. Due to *A. canadensis’* adaptable behavior, in favorable soil conditions – moist soil and partial sun – it can grow aggressively, becoming crowded, which limits the number of flowers on the plant. Because of this, when planting *A. canadensis*, space the plants about 12 inches apart. Even though *A. canadensis* can run a bit wild, it is a native plant that supports our wildlife, quickly regenerates after copious amounts of damage from browsing deer and provides nectar to bees and butterflies.

*Zizia aurea* is also a larval host for the striking black swallowtail butterfly, which eats its foliage as a caterpillar and enjoys the pollen and nectar as an adult. Plant *Z. aurea* in your yard and prepared to be visually inspired.

*Anemone canadensis* has radiant yellow flowers that look similar in structure to *A. podagraria* and bloom in May and throughout June. As temperatures rise in the summer and early fall, *Z. aurea’s* foliage and seed pods turn slightly purple to create a dynamic garden scene. Its native range extends from eastern Canada down to the southern United States. Despite its extensive range, *Z. aurea* requires moist soil and full sun, according to the Missouri Botanical Garden, and it is recommended for planting in rain gardens or along stream banks.

*Z. aurea* greatly benefits local wildlife. The shallow, miniature flowers are the perfect pollen baskets for insect pollinators with short mouthparts such as bees and small butterflies. According to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, *Z. aurea* is also a larval host for the striking black swallowtail butterfly, which eats its foliage as a caterpillar and enjoys the pollen and nectar as an adult. Plant *Z. aurea* in your yard and prepared to be visually inspired.