

Majority Threatened

Just as the rare ferns in Miami hammocks face being overwhelmed by invading exotic plants, so do most of Florida's other rare native plants.

A compilation of case studies in the late 1990s, supported by FDEP's Bureau of Invasive Plant Management, revealed that over half (60%) of Florida's 534 native plant species currently listed as endangered or threatened are up against additional threats from invasive exotics.

About 30 listed species were documented as having already suffered some degree of population loss from displacement by EPPC Category I invasives. Over 170 other listed rare species faced imminent loss from invasives occurring within their habitats. Another 120+ listed species had invasives "at the door" — occurring in adjacent habitats. Involved in these plant-vs.-plant interactions were 28 Category I and two Category II pest-plant species (the *Schefflera* and *Epipremnum* shown here make it 32 species total!)

Recognizing the direct adverse effects of exotic pest plants on rare native plants is now a basic element of setting priorities for control of invasives in Florida. For more information or to add new observations, write kburks@fnai.org.

— K. C. Burks, Florida Natural
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