

AlterNATIVES to Heavenly Bamboo!

Aka Nandina or Sacred Bamboo

What is Heavenly Bamboo?

Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*) is also called Sacred Bamboo, or just Nandina. It is in the barberry family (*Berberidaceae*) and not bamboo at all. This is a popular shrub used in landscaping because of its evergreen leaves and ability to grow in many climates. Heavenly Bamboo is native to Asia and India and was introduced in the US in 1804 as an ornamental shrub.



Why Shouldn't I Plant It?

Heavenly Bamboo is considered invasive in many southern states where it has formed dense stands in natural areas. These dense stands displace native plants that would otherwise thrive. While Heavenly Bamboo has not been observed spreading in Indiana, it is still harmful. The fruit it produces contains cyanogenic glycosides. When these fruit are consumed by birds in late winter or early spring this glycoside is converted into cyanide, killing the bird that consumed them. Reports in Georgia found mass death of Cedar Waxwings with stomachs filled with Heavenly Bamboo fruit. Some birds succumbed to this poison within minutes of consumption.

Why Should I Choose a Native Alternative?

Native plants are not only beautiful, but also benefit birds and other wildlife. Unlike non-native species, these plants support multiple pollinators and insects, providing food for Indiana birds. Seedlings of native plants also play nicely in neighboring natural areas.

For More Information

- Indiana Native Plant Society: www.indiananativeplants.org
- Indiana Invasive Species Council: www.indianainvasivespecies.org
- Local SWCDs: iaswcd.org/contact-your-local-swcd/
- **Additional native alternatives include:** American Beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*), Possumhaw (*Ilex decidua*), and Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)

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Goat's Beard

(*Aruncus dioicus*)

- Aka. Bride's Feathers
- Herbaceous perennial best for moist fertile soil
- Full sun or part shade
- Bushy clump-forming plant with large showy blooms, 4-6 feet tall



Winterberry

(*Ilex verticillata*)

- Showy red berries in fall and winter
- Prefers acidic to medium soils but tolerates clay, wet soil, and pollution
- Need male and female plants to produce fruit



Black or Red Chokeberry

(*Aronia melanocarpa*; *A. arbutifolia*)

- Spring flowers in May
- Fruit (black or red) in late summer and fall
- Beautiful fall foliage
- Good for hedges and rain gardens.

