

WILD PLANTS FOR DOMESTIC GARDENS AND PUBLIC PARKS

Ingvild Austad*, Leif Hauge, Liv Norunn Hamre

Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Abstract

The assortment of garden plants currently available in garden centres and plant nurseries (planteskoler) in Norway is a result of a long history of supply and demand patterns, import trends and a local determination to develop plant varieties fit for specific climate conditions and harsh weather cycles. However, among the assortment available there are some garden plants with uncertain genetic origin and unknown growth characteristics which have proliferated not only in private gardens, but also in public parks, urban areas and green-belts all over the country.

Recently, there has been a growing awareness that some of these commonly used plants are alien species included on the Norwegian black list of alien species. Some of the aliens are invasive, and have spread from domestic gardens to natural habitats, constituting a threat to the native biodiversity.

While it is clear that many wild native plants may actually provide a suitable replacement for decorative but invasive garden plants, it has not yet become a common practice in Norway. To date, the demand for such substitute plants has been low, the production small and the variety of available species limited.

While the importation of alien species has grown, native plant biodiversity has been suffering great declines and a growing number of plant species are included on the Norwegian Red list. The habitats of many of these wild plants are further threatened by human development and land cover change. For these species, domestic gardens, public parks and green areas may actually compensate as biotopes.

These types of issues are discussed in the book entitled «Ville vekster for hager og grøntanlegg», where 150 native plant species are presented as suitable replacements for non-natives with details on growth requirements and special characteristics for use.

The book focusses on how wild plants can be an ecological alternative to invasive species and at the same time can be adapted to the principles of garden design and architecture. It also explores how natural biotopes such as open forest and species-rich meadows can be established as parts of a garden or park. The presented species are suited both for domestic gardens and public parks as well as other green areas. The book is accessible to owners of private gardens as well as professional practitioners in the gardening and landscaping sector.

The book is the first of its kind in Norway and fully illustrated.

Keywords: black listed species, red listed species, landscape architecture, ecological gardening

References

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e-mail: Ingvild.austad@hvl.no