

Be careful what you plant. It might accidentally contribute to the destruction of your landscape.

While reading an article in the October, 2015, issue of my favorite gardening magazine, *Fine Gardening*, I saw on page 83, boldly printed the words **Invasive Alert**. Much to my dismay, I discovered that a plant I truly enjoyed growing last season just might be invasive. According to the USDA, an invasive plant is defined as, “A plant having the ability to thrive and spread aggressively outside its native range.” Invasive plants are known to take over, often killing out native species.

Not only did I purchase one of these plants last spring, I purchased a number of them and used them in our container plantings. They grew amazingly well and performed beautifully, cascading over the edge of the flowerpots.

When I prepare a container planting, I try to incorporate at least three kinds of plants, those that stand tall and are prominent, called thrillers, those that fill space within the planter, called fillers, and those that cascade over the flowerpot, called spillers. As it turns out, my lovely spillers might be potential killers.



Most often, container plantings consist of annual plants. If left outdoors the plants perish when frost arrives. As it turns out, these spiller plants are actually hardy in Zones 4-8, thus making them perennial plants for our area. I also discovered that those containers we had placed on top of the ground, have spiller plants cascading to the point where they are lying atop the soil. The other day, while attempting to remove these containers and store them for the winter, I discovered that many of these spillers rooted to the soil. “How cool I thought. Next spring, all I will need to do is dig up a few of them, transplant them into my

new containers, and allow the remaining plants to grow naturally in the flower border as a groundcover.”

This supposedly invasive plant is generally sold as an accent plant. Commonly, it is called golden moneywort, sometimes referred to as creeping jenny. Its scientific name is *Lysimachia nummularia* ‘Aurea’. The industry advertises it as, “An outstanding foliage accent plant forming a charming low, mat of butter-yellow leaves—excellent in pots, tubs or cascading over walls.”

In nature, golden moneywort is an attractive, low-growing, creeping ground cover which forms a leafy mat only two to four inches tall. It readily roots where the leaf nodes come in contact with the soil. This particular cultivar ‘Aurea’ features beautifully rounded, slightly ruffled, yellow leaves. It easily grows in average medium-to-wet, well-drained soil and does well in full sun to shade. Golden moneywort has no serious insect or disease problems. Unfortunately, it’s also known to spread aggressively.

I now have a question for you. If you’ve grown this particular plant and allowed it to become naturalized in your landscape, how difficult has it been to control? Please let me know. Long ago I discovered that although a plant is sometimes deemed invasive, it depends where it is growing geographically.

In the meantime, because Golden moneywort ‘Aurea’ is such an attractive plant, I will allow a few of the sprigs to remain rooted in my landscape. Next spring I plan to monitor them closely. If they appear overly aggressive, I can assure you, I will be the killer of my spiller. After all, I don’t want this plant destroying my landscape.