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# SUNNYSIDE THYMES

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## SMG's Grow Native!

By Marilee Burnside, SMG Member

**Have I Got a Deal for You!** Raise your hand if you have planted a Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) or have one or more in your yard. I'm willing to bet that almost all of my fellow Master Gardeners can respond in the affirmative on this question. I did plant them, and cussed at every pruning because those treacherous thorns are the worst! Well, as you are aware from our article last year, they are indeed an invasive species and are on the Terrestrial Plant Rule that comes into effect on the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month. They will be illegal to sell, gift, barter, exchange, distribute, transport, or introduce into the State of Indiana. So, dig 'em up, and put them in a black plastic bag or in your burning pile and dispose of them. First though, if you are a **Floyd County resident**, take a photo of them, before you torch them.

Then, scoot on out to you local nursery and purchase *Ceanothus americanus*, commonly called a New Jersey tea. Keep your receipt! The New Jersey tea is a compact, dense, rounded shrub, which typically grows 2-3' tall (less frequently to 4'). It is native to Missouri where it occurs in prairies, glades, dry open woods and thickets throughout the state. Cylindrical clusters (1-2" long) of tiny, fragrant, white flowers (1/8") appear on long stalks at the stem ends or upper leaf axils in late spring. Toothed, broad-ovate, medium to dark green leaves (to 4" long) are gray and hairy below. Young twigs are noticeably yellow and stand out in winter. Their dried leaves were used as a tea substitute, albeit without caf-

feine, in American Revolutionary War times, hence the common name. As with most native plants, they are drought resistant and hearty. They prefer shade to part shade, and grow in a wide range of dry to moist soils. They have a very deep root system and are not easily transplanted, once established. They will have a beautiful, showy white flower that attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Once you've planted your New Jersey tea shrubs, have someone take a nice photo of you and your replacement native plants. Take your photos of your awful Japanese barberries, you with your new tea shrubs, and your receipt and visit your Floyd County Soil & Water Conservation District on Corydon Pike, phone 812-945-9936. Share your photos and receipt with Angel Jackson, and get reimbursed \$10 for each native plant purchased to replace your invasives, up to \$100. It's a good reward for ridding your land of those invasive and harmful shrubs and putting in a good hearty native that will feed your pollinators and hummingbirds.

This offer applies to any of the invasive plants listed on the Terrestrial Plant Rule, and for planting a native plant in their stead. Tell Angel that Marilee sent you!

Reference: [https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id\\_plant=ceam](https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=ceam)



Photos: Bugwood.org - University of Georgia

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