

INVASIVE PLANT PROFILE

Dead Nettle, Yellow Lamium

Lamium galeobdolon

Family: Lamiaceae Zone 4



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Why is *Lamium galeobdolon* a problem?

Lamium galeobdolon reproduces vegetatively through runners, as well as by seed. Each plant produces approximately 800 seeds, which are typically dispersed by insects. In some areas, runner growth has been tracked at 1m per year. The plant forms a dense mat that can climb up and over small structures such as tree stumps and low-growing vegetation, smothering out native plants such as *Polystichum munitum*. *L. galeobdolon* can tolerate a wide range of soil, water, and shade conditions, has attractive foliage, and spreads rapidly, making it a popular plant in flower baskets, garden beds and as a shade-tolerant groundcover. However, these very features, combined with inappropriate disposal of *L. galeobdolon* by gardeners – primarily dumping garden waste into or on the edge of natural areas – has resulted in this plant invading local ecosystems. It is now often found in woodlands, ravines and riparian areas, where soils range from poor to rich in organic matter. It can grow in a range of pH conditions, from moderately acidic to alkaline.

L. galeobdolon cultivars are also invasive. In BC's Lower Mainland, the invader is the cultivar 'Variegatum' within subspecies montanum. In the Seattle area, the invader is the cultivar 'Florentinum' of the subspecies argentatum. Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board has subsequently listed *L. galeobdolon* and all its cultivars and subspecies as a Class C weed. To be on the safe side, plants recommended as alternatives to Dead Nettle in the Lower Mainland do not include cultivars.

How is *Lamium galeobdolon* controlled once a site is invaded?

Plants are best pulled out by hand during the fall through early spring, two to three times per year, before seeds set. Rakes are often used in manual control methods, as each *L. galeobdolon* stem easily breaks off, making 'picking and pulling' tedious work. Great care must be taken to remove all parts of the plant, as rooted fragments will regenerate. Ensure that removed plants are bagged and disposed of as garbage. Composting will only support plant growth – a compost bin will become full of *L. galeobdolon*.

Economic Costs of Control

The City of Surrey has listed *L. galeobdolon* as one of 6 priority invasive species to be removed from natural areas. The City has identified private gardens, hanging baskets, and yard waste as the primary sources of infestations. Physical control costs for the removal of the plant from natural areas are \$11/m²/year. When including the cost of replanting and maintaining an area as part of restoration work, total costs for *L. galeobdolon* control range from \$11/m²/yr, to \$21/m²/year if applying herbicides.

For more information visit

http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/documents/2007_listings/Lamium%20galeobdolon.pdf

Local municipalities including the City of Surrey, Coquitlam and the Township of Langley have discovered *L. galeobdolon* invading natural areas, and are now putting control and containment strategies in place.



Plant description

Lamium galeobdolon is a fast-growing perennial vine native to temperate regions of Asia and Europe. It has serrated, egg-shaped leaves. These range from 2.5 to 8cm in length and are oppositely arranged on a purplish, square-shaped, hairy stem. The leaf undersides are often lighter green or sometimes purple, while the upper sides often have a silver or white pattern and a wrinkly texture. *L. galeobdolon* has bright yellow flowers which appear as pairs of dense clusters between pairs of leaves. It flowers between April and June.

Market Alternatives

There are other groundcovers that offer similar benefits to Dead Nettle, such as being shade tolerant and having attractive variegated leaves, without becoming invasive and a threat to local ecosystems.

- 1 **Foam flower *Tiarella trifoliata*** This evergreen perennial spreads to form a carpet of green hairy leaves that turn a nice bronze in the winter. In the spring it provides an airy show of tiny white flowers on a tall stem. This is also a woodland plant and thrives in light to deep shade.

NATIVE SPECIES, PART SHADE/SHADE, MOIST 15-20CM TALL X 45-60CM WIDE



- 2 **Hosta *Hosta spp.*** For an alternative with variegated leaves this is a good plant. The large leaves range in colours and variegation and the flower spikes are an added bonus in spring. Mass planting Hosta creates a lush ground cover. This perennial is a good choice for woodland gardens complimenting native ferns of the west coast.

PART SHADE/SHADE, MOIST, SIZES VARY WITH SPECIES AND CULTIVAR.



- 3 **Wintercreeper *Euonymus fortunei*** Wintercreeper also has variegated foliage. This evergreen shrub is a reliable plant for many sites and for various uses, including as a groundcover, foundation or a border. It grows as both a groundcover and a low shrub.

SUN/PART SHADE, MOIST, 30-60CM TALL X 90-105CM WIDE



- 4 **Bishop's wort *Epimedium spp.*** A deciduous mounding groundcover with heart-shaped foliage and delicate spring flowers. The colours of the leaves and flowers vary with cultivars. It is recommended for a woodland planting, under deciduous trees and in a perennial border.

PART SHADE/SHADE, MOIST, SIZE VARIES WITH SPECIES



- 5 **Redwood sorrel *Oxalis oregana*** A deciduous ground cover with clover-like foliage and white flowers in spring. Redwood sorrel is suitable under trees and for large shady sites. It grows rapidly to fill in a space, and creates a lush green mat for spring, summer and fall interest before dying back in winter. Some varieties come with red on the underside on the leaf.

NATIVE SPECIES, PART SHADE/SHADE, DRY/MOIST, 8-25CM X 30-50CM SPREAD



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