The air potato, which can grow up to 8 inches per day, covers native vegetation, blocking out sunlight ar

E xotic plants continue to adversely affect Florida's native b

"Exotic plants are a problem statewide," said Beth Jackson, environmental program supervisor for Orang

Despite the knowledge about the risks of invasive exotic plants, retailers continue to sell the plants; hom

"There are native alternatives that will give people the same feel in their yard [as exotics]," Jackson said.
About 25,000 non-native species are present in Florida and account for more than one-third of all plants

A 2009 City of Orlando, Municipal Forest Resource Analysis by the Center for Urban Forest Research a

Many of the exotic plants were introduced by accident, before people knew the risks, Jackson explained

"A lot of exotics escaped from people's backyards," said Jackie Rolly, a board member at Oakland Natu

Rolly said many people who moved to Florida from other areas like to plant vegetation native to their ho

Orange County tries to limit growth of exotics by using herbicides. According to Jackson, the invasive sp

Among the suggestions the county recommends is for homeowners to learn which plants are native and

People also can participate in events to remove exotics from public lands. For example, the county and

In South Florida, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Florida Water Management District, U.S. Dep

Rolly explained that when people import plants, they do not bring the species' natural enemies, which ke

"One plant can devastate an ecosystem," Rolly said. "Exotics are starting to be a serious problem."

For more information about Florida invasive species, visit www.fleppc.org/list/list.htm on the Web.