Invasive Plants and Insects

Our infographics both focused on an invasive English ivy, which has the botanical name of Hedera helix, is invasive to California and mostly likely to affect redwood and riparian forests. In those forests the trees most affected are usually the Fremont cottonwood, White Alder, and the Willow. However deciduous trees are overly more vulnerable than evergreens. The Cal-IPC Inventory, which gives ratings to invasive species that threaten native wildlife, gives English ivy a rating of high. Epic gardening gives them plant an "A" in negative impact, distribution, and invasiveness.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends is planting Alumroot, which has the botanical name of Heuchera americana. Alumroot has the added benefit of not being a vine and thus being easier to control, and more importantly is a California native. It is noted that this plant is a perennial and as such, unlike English ivy flowers. It's adaptability These flowers are pink and white and grow spring through summer.

English ivy is an invasive species for many reasons. This plant can outcompete almost everything in native California forests. English ivy evergreen will climb trees and dominate the canopy, blocking out natural sunlight. On the ground it creates a groundcover that is dense and outcompetes everything around it. It also takes up nutrients that natives need. Ivy creates a "sail effect" which can cause trees to more easily fall over in storms; the weight of the ivy can also makes it easier for smaller trees to fall down in these storms. These plants displace native plants, especially ones that native wildlife are reliant on. It should also be noted that the leaves are toxic to be eaten, which can affect native animals. English ivy is easily flammable and can contribute to wildfires. The foliage of the ivy catches fire and then the flame can easily
climb up the tree. The foliage that trees are able to keep at the very top of their structure is known as "broccoli head".

Over 200 species of trees in southern California have been affected by Fularium dieback caused by the polyphagous shot hole borer (PHSB). If a tree has been infected, it is imperative to disinfect cutting tools and contain the infected wood to prevent spreading the fungal infection further. The following California native trees are known to be susceptible or are viable hosts for PHSB. Listed are several California native trees that are resilient to Fularium dieback as of writing, and hold horticultural value as usable street trees in the LA basin. PSHB (Euwallaecea sp.), a type of ambrosia beetle, is a non-native species from Vietnam. It is a vector for Fusarium dieback, a fungal disease rampant among southern California’s tree population.

Sources:
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