

Important consequences of a passion to collect plants

An international team of researchers has recently warned again that the number of non resident species that propagate in nature are continuously increasing. A well known reason for this worldwide spreading of plants and animals since the 1950th is the globalization of commerce.

A largely unknown fact is that many invasive plant species had already started their journey to Europe during the 18th and 19th century: researchers travelling around the world brought their discoveries back from Asia and America and these plants were then cultivated with enthusiasm in parks and gardens. In this way the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) originating from China already came to Europe around 1700. The Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was an appreciated ornamental plant during the Victorian age and was even awarded the gold medal as most interesting plant of the year in Utrecht in 1947. And in the past the giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) was highly appreciated as plant for the garden.

In August 2016 the first regulation concerning invasive alien species of Union concern entered into force. This list is called “list of the European Union”. It contains 37 animal and plant species. Among them 24 really live freely in nature in Germany. During this summer this European Union list should be completed by 12 additional species. Among them two ornamental plants of gardening importance: the giant rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*) and the African crimson fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*).

Gabriele Rautgundis RICHTER

Gartenfreund August 2017

www.gartenfreunde.de/gartenpraxis/gut-zu-wissen/sammelleidenschaft-mit-folgen