

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

www.mass.gov/agr



Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Ashley E. Randle
Commissioner

TO: Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (“MIPAG”)

FROM: Ashley Randle, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

REGARDING: The request to add the following plants to the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List:

- *Aralia elata* (Japanese angelica tree), designated as Invasive
- *Symplocos paniculata* (sapphire berry, Asiatic sweetleaf), designated as Likely Invasive

DATE: May 11, 2026

On April 29, 2026, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (“Department”) held a public hearing regarding the addition of the above-listed plants to the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List (“List”). The Department also received written comments prior and up to 5:00 pm on May 1, 2026. The written comments provided to the Department were in support of listing the species noted above. After reviewing the scientific information provided by MIPAG in its request and reviewing the comments, the Department has made the determination that all of the above listed species pose a threat to land in Massachusetts and therefore approves the MIPAG request to add the species to the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List.

Agents/Growers will no longer be able to receive new stock, or begin growing new stock, but may sell any existing stock during the phase-out period listed below:

- *Aralia elata* (Japanese angelica tree): May 11, 2026 through May 11, 2029
- *Symplocos paniculata* (sapphire berry, Asiatic sweetleaf): May 11, 2026 through May 11, 2028

MDAR will work to ensure that nursery Agents/Growers are aware of the additions to the list and the corresponding phase-out periods. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Taryn LaScola, Director of the Division of Crop and Pest Services, at taryn.lascola@mass.gov.

The Department recognizes the importance of the control and prevention of invasive species, as well as the associated impacts that a prohibition of a plant may have, and values the ongoing work and information provided by the MIPAG.