

Little Plot of Horrors

At first, gardeners delighted in the new strains of azaleas from China. These flowers came in all colors and lit up their backyards. But unlike native azaleas, the strains spread asexually, popping up where they had not been planted, eventually taking over whole gardens, even interstate medians. They were impervious to herbicides. It seemed that nothing could stop their advance, until someone noticed that they shriveled when a human stood nearby for an appreciable length of time. They could not stand human odor! Governments grasped at this vulnerability to attempt to halt the foreign invasion. They mounted publicity campaigns, urging citizens to enjoy the beauty of azalea gardens but to go slowly and leave time to smell and stop the flowers.

