JAPANESE BARBERRY

invasive fact sheet

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Japanese barberry invades Vermont's forests and fields. The plants are **easy to see in the fall** when their red berries are most colorful.

The Problem

- Japanese barberry can quickly colonize a forest. Birds and small mammals feast on the fruits and drop them, starting new populations. The plants also reproduce vegetatively. Individual stems reach toward the ground and 'layer,' developing new plants.
- It can grow so thickly in woodlands that few native shrub and tree seedlings or herbaceous plants survive.
- Barberry infestations can lead to increases in rates of Lyme disease. Ticks like to hang out on the tips of shrubs, waiting for mammals to pass by. Mice populations — an alternate host for Lyme disease — thrive in the thorny Barberry stands.
- Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) is sold in different ornamental varieties such as 'Aurea' with gold leaves or 'Crimson Pygmy' with purple leaves. Though these cultivars look different from the green-leaved Japanese barberry that is found in forests, studies show that these ornamental varieties are all capable of producing offspring with green leaves.

Recognize Japanese barberry

spatula-shaped leaves

red fruit

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yellow flowers hanging below stem

single spine at each leaf base

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Remove

Mechanical removal:

Hand pull: Any time of year when the ground is soft, especially after a rain, hand pull small plants by the base of the stem. Be sure to pull up the entire root system. Hang from a branch to prevent re-rooting. For larger plants, use a Weed Wrench™. Continue to monitor the area every year for new seedlings.

Cut stump: Cut plants back in the fall or winter. Wrap a few layers of burlap or thick plastic over the stump and tie tightly with twine or rope. Check covered stumps periodically and cut back any new growth.

Chemical removal:

Cut stump: Cut the plant 4 inches above the ground. Use a drip bottle to apply a 18-21% glyphosate solution to the stump within one hour of cutting. This is best done in late summer through winter when plants are transporting resources to their root systems.

Low volume foliar spray: This method is used for dense populations and best left to a contractor. In the fall, when native plants are losing their leaves, spray a 2% glyphosate solution on the entire leaf surface of the plant. In order to avoid drift to native plants, spray only on calm days.

Safe Chemical Application

√ ***Develop an Integrated Plant Management approach.*** Use chemical control as only ONE piece of your prevention and management strategy.

√ ***The label found on the herbicide container is the law.*** It indicates the concentrations to use, what protective clothing to wear, how to apply the product, and what environmental and human health hazards are associated with the chemical.

√ ***Use aquatic formulations within 10 feet of water.*** You need a permit to apply herbicides in wetlands. You cannot apply herbicides within 100 feet of a well-head. Contact VT DEC at 802-241-3761 for more information.

√ ***You need to be certified to apply herbicides on land that you do not own.***

√ ***Hire a contractor to manage large infestations.*** A good contractor will have the knowledge to help create an effective management plan. For a list of certified contractors, contact the VT Department of Agriculture at 802-828-3482.

Replant

Non-invasive Alternatives

© S&A. Wasowski, TWC

smokebush
Cotinus obovatus

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winterberry
Ilex verticillata

© Iowa State University Exten-

fothergilla
Fothergilla major

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