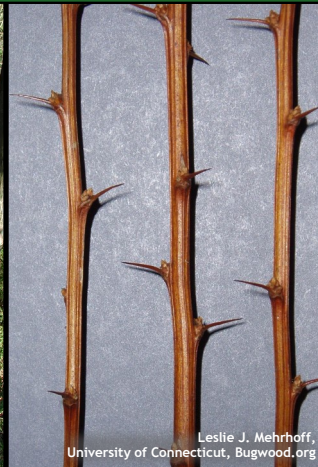


Japanese Barberry

(*Berberis thunbergii*)



Key ID Features

Arrangement: alternate

Leaves: paddle shaped leaves, 1 inch long, arranged in clusters

Flowers: 2-4 yellow flowers per inflorescence, flowers hang below stem

Fruit: red fruit

Stem: branches have thin straight spines at the base of the leaf

Root: yellowish fibrous roots, rhizomes

Growth Habit: deciduous thorny shrub grows 2-8 ft. tall



The Impact

Japanese Barberry has been commonly used as an ornamental planting in North America since the late 1800s. It comes in many varieties that can be green, purple, red, or golden in color. It often escapes cultivation, and the arching canes of this shrub create dense stands, which can re-root when the tips contact the ground. It has many impacts to the forest understory, including crowding out native plant species and providing a humid environment for invasive earthworms which deplete organic matter and increase erosion potential. That same humid environment also creates ideal conditions for ticks and white footed mice where Lyme bacteria can transfer between the two species which are known vectors for the disease. Studies have shown that rates of Lyme bacteria in tick populations increases in areas where Japanese Barberry is present.

Quick Facts

Plant Family: Berberidaceae

Origin: Asia

Habitat: disturbed areas, meadows and fields, forest edges, forests, floodplains

Present in Vermont?: yes

Method of Spread: primarily by seeds dispersed via wildlife and rhizomes

Status: Class B Noxious Weed*
<http://bit.ly/VTPlantQuarantine>

*The Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine listing means it is illegal to buy, sell, or

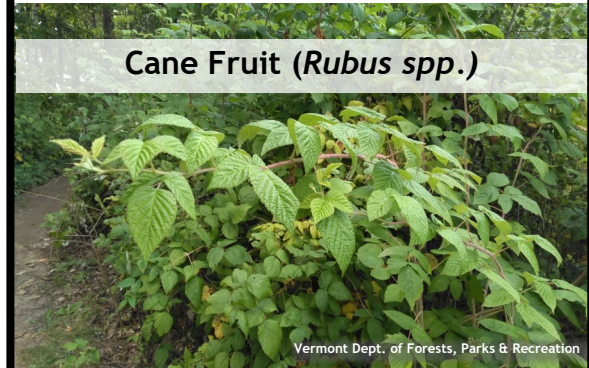
Invasive: Japanese Barberry



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Common Look-alike

Cane Fruit (*Rubus spp.*)



Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation

Distinguishing features

Leaves: compound leaves composed of 3 toothed leaflets

Thorns: curved thorns

Native Plant Alternatives



John Ruter, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

Winterberry
(*Ilex verticillata*): attracts birds and butterflies, provides nesting site for birds



Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Nannyberry
(*Viburnum lentago*): food source for wildlife throughout the fall, grows in a variety of moist soils, often used in hedges, berries are edible

Control Information

To learn more about identification & control options, check out the Gallery of Land Invasives on VTinvasives.org and these additional resources:

http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_010260.pdf

<https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/JapaneseBarberryBCP.pdf>

References: [EDDMaps Ontario - Species - Japanese Barberry](#), [Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program - Japanese Barberry](#), [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources - Japanese Barberry](#)

This publication was created in 2019 by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Transportation and other VTInvasives.org partners.

