

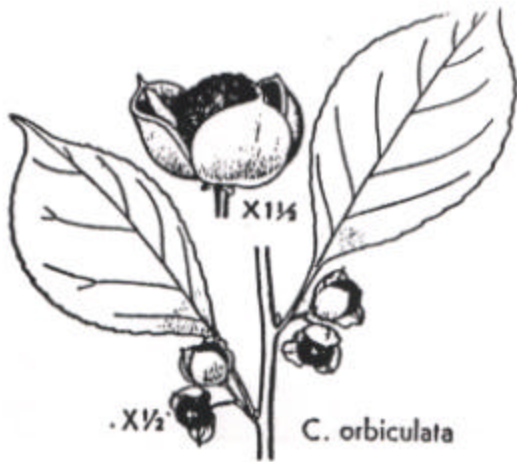
INVASIVE EXOTICS

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus

Bittersweet Family (Celastraceae)

What does it look like? Oriental bittersweet, native to Japan, is a deciduous, twining, woody vine with abundant bright yellow and red fruits that appear all along the stem in clusters of three to seven. Vines can grow to over 5 in. in diameter and 60 ft. long. The leaves are oval to nearly round in shape, occur singly at different heights and on different sides of the stem, and have a yellow fall color. The roots of the plant are bright orange.



What habitats are threatened by this plant? Oriental bittersweet invades open woods, thickets, and roadsides; upland meadows and young woods are most vulnerable.

How does this plant spread? Oriental bittersweet was introduced to North America in the mid-1800's. By 1974 it escaped cultivation in 21 states, from Maine to Georgia and as far west as Minnesota. Birds, and people who use the fruit in dried arrangements, are its primary means of dispersal. Oriental bittersweet also root-suckers profusely.

What problems does this plant cause? The vine climbs up surrounding plants, shading their leaves. Oriental bittersweet aggressively competes for space, water and nutrients. Its aggressive twining growth habit constricts the host plant's stem, impeding sap flow. Dense infestations make the host plants too heavy and prone to wind and storm damage.

How can it be controlled? The spread of Oriental bittersweet is controlled by not planting it in the landscape. Instead, substitute the native American bittersweet, *Celastrus scandens*, in its place. Where Oriental bittersweet already exists, regular mowing will eradicate it. Triclopyr herbicides have proven effective both as foliar sprays and when applied on cut stumps. Follow label directions when applying any herbicide.

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