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PORCELAIN-BERRY

Ampelopsis glandulosa var. *brevipedunculata*

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IPM.CAHNR.UConn.edu/invasive-species

Introduction

This fact sheet discusses identification and management of porcelain-berry, an invasive plant that damages our environment by displacing native species and reducing biodiversity.

Identifying Features

OVERVIEW:

Deciduous, woody vine that climbs, suffocates, and strangles other plants. Rapid growth: in a single season, vines can grow up to 20 ft. in length, creating a dense, sprawling, tangled monoculture (Figure 1).

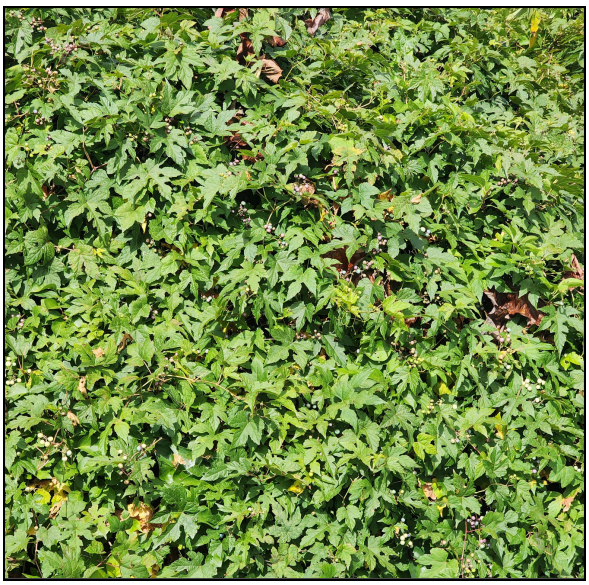


Figure 1) mature twining vines create a monoculture. Figure 2) foliage. Photos by Alyssa Siegel-Miles

LEAVES

Alternate, broadly ovate with a heart-shaped base (Figure 2). Dark green to blue green; shiny on upper leaf with fine hairs on underside. Varies from slightly **lobed to deeply dissected** (typically 3-5 lobes). Coarse teeth and distinctive thin whitish hair tips along the margins. Turn vibrant yellow in the fall.

STEMS

Branched tendrils arise opposite leaf base on new growth, enabling the vine to climb. Unlike other native woody vines species in the Vitaceae family, these tendrils **lack adhesive disks**, which help distinguish the species. New stems are whitish-green, smooth to lightly hairy, slightly square with regularly spaced swollen nodes. Bark is glossy, light gray to gray, and rough, with prominent lenticels, ridged and furrowed, splitting into diamond-shape patterns and forming thin flakes as the bark ages. Pith is white and continuous across the nodes. Stems can grow to 4 in thick.

Flowers
Shallow, vigorous, wide-spreading roots compete aggressively with understory vegetation and turfgrass. Roots often damage sidewalks in urban sites.

Fruit
Berries appear in erect clusters in July-October, progressing from pale lilac, to green, to bright, metallic blue (Figure 4). Each berry contains 2-4 seeds. Fruit persists through winter.

Reproduction
Primarily by seed; also, can be by vegetative regeneration. Fruit and seeds are eaten and dispersed by birds and mammals. Seeds remain viable in the soil for years.

Look-Alikes:
Native wild grape (Vitis spp.) has unbranched tendrils and shredded bark that lacks lenticels. Its stem pith is brown and not continuous across nodes; its flowers have petals that touch at tips and occur in panicles. Porcelain-berry may also be confused with several native species in the same genus: Ampelopsis arborea and Ampelopsis cordata.

Habitat
Porcelain-berry can grow in a variety of habitats and soil conditions. It prefers rich moist soils and full sun but tolerates partial shade. It establishes at streambanks, forest edges, roadsides and other disturbed areas. The thick mats of vines formed by this plant can completely cover and shade out shrubs and young trees under its leafy canopy.

Control
Mechanical Control
For small infestations, seedlings/very young plants can be pulled or removed, preferably before flower bud's form. Ensure the entire rootstock is removed. Seedlings are easiest to remove when the soil is moist. Pull steadily and slowly to minimize soil disturbance. Tamp down the soil after plants are removed to minimize seed germination. Larger vines may be cut back near the ground to kill top growth, although plants will regrow from the rootstock.

Routine monitoring
for seedling emergence is critical. Seeds germinate readily and can remain viable in the soil for years. Porcelain-berry also resprouts from roots and fragments left in the soil; thorough removal and follow-up are essential. Where thick mats cover existing vegetation, lifting and cutting vines can help surviving native plants regenerate by exposing them to sunlight.

Figure 3) foliage and inconspicuous flowers. Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Figure 4) variably colored fruit. Photo by Alyssa Siegel-Miles.

Disposal of removed plants

Plant material with fruit present should be burned or bagged and disposed of in municipal waste. Plant parts without fruit should be placed in the sun to dry out completely (solarization) to render plant material non-viable and may be put in a compost or mulch pile, provided care is taken to ensure that all removed plant parts are dead and no fruit is present.

Chemical Control

Follow label recommendations when handling and applying all chemical products. A licensed professional applicator may be consulted or hired to apply herbicides.

In areas with large infestations, chemical treatments may be necessary. Systemic herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr can be applied to foliage or to the cut stems of larger vines from early summer through fall. Cut stem herbicide applications should be avoided if stems are growing along or carpeting the ground. Porcelain-berry can easily re-root from pieces of stem that are in contact with the soil.

For **basal bark applications**, a higher concentration of triclopyr mixed with basal oil may be applied to easily accessible sections of vines. Follow-up examination of treated vines is essential, as re-sprouting and emergence of new seedlings is common due to the persistent seed bank in the soil.

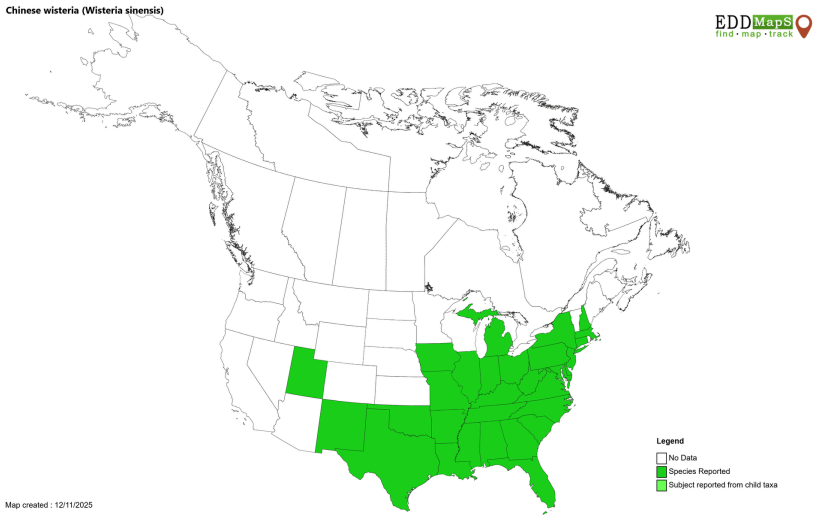
Distribution

Porcelain-berry is found from New England to North Carolina and west to Michigan. It is most widespread in the Northeast U.S.

Background and Native Alternatives

Native to Japan and parts of northern China, porcelain-berry was first brought to the U.S. around 1870 for its perceived ornamental and horticultural value.

Some native plant substitutes to consider after porcelain-berry plants are removed include trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), and goldflame honeysuckle (*Lonicera heckrottii*).



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