

European privet

Ligustrum vulgare

Description

Planted widely historically but now less utilized; vulnerable to anthracnose twig blight.

Habit

Bushy, stout, shrub with unevenly spreading branches; ranging in height from 3.5-4.5 m (12-15 ft), with a comparable spread.

Leaves

Simple, opposite, elliptic to ovate, 3-7 cm (1.2-2.5 in) long, smooth margins, dark green above and paler beneath, turns purplish in fall, leaf out early, leaves retained until late fall/early winter.

Stems

Young branches green, minutely puberulent, becoming smooth with age; thin, gray-brown bark with lenticels.

Flowers

Small, white in color, 4 petals, 2.5-7.5 cm (1-3 in) long, borne in terminal, branched cluster; strong





odor; blooms mid- June.

Fruits and Seeds

Fruits are small, lustrous, black, berry-like drupes that ripen in September and persist on the shrub through winter.

Habitat

Native to Europe, North Africa; Ornamental shrub that has escaped to colonize disturbed areas, forests, and grasslands; can tolerate full sun to partial shade.

Reproduction

By seeds that are widely disseminated by birds.

Similar

Superficially resembles bush honeysuckles but leaves are smaller, flowers/fruit held at branch tip, not along its length. Also, similar to native dogwood, which have entire leaf margins and Viburnum (Viburnum), which have toothed leaf margins.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor sunny, disturbed, upland grasslands and forest edges. Privet leafs out early in spring and retains its leaves late in fall. Hand pull or dig seedlings & small plants; remove all roots to prevent resprouting. Cutting is effective when cut stumps are treated with herbicide. Basal bark treatment is also effective. Foliar herbicide treatment may be effective for large populations where few natives are present.

Credits

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