

Chinese bittersweet

Celastrus rosthornianus

Description

Widely planted as an ornamental vine, sometimes planted accidentally when mistaken for American bittersweet.

Habit

Perennial, woody climbing vine. Prolific producer of red-orange berries. Stems may reach 6 inches in diameter. Male and Female flowers usually borne on separate plants.

Leaves

Alternate, glossy, and round with a pointed tip and shallow-toothed margins, 2-5 inches long.

Stems

Growing up to 6 inches in diameter.

Flowers

Small, inconspicuous, 5-petaled, greenish-yellow flowers in clusters of 3-7 at leaf axils. Most plants dioecious.

Fruits and Seeds





Showy, round capsules, clustered in leaf axils. Green in summer, yellow-orange in fall. Split open at maturity to reveal 3 red-orange, fleshy fruits, each containing 1 or 2 seeds. Dispersed by birds and small mammals.

Habitat

Found in forests, woodlands, fields, hedge-rows, and coastal areas.

Reproduction

Vegetatively from root sprouts or by seed.

Similar

American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) has fewer, larger clusters of fruits or flowers, which are terminal rather than at leaf axils. Leaves are less rounded and nearly twice as long as wide. Hybrids can occur.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Dig out or hand pull seedlings. Basal bark with triclopyr ester plus a surfactant, cut stem treatment with glyphosate or triclopyr amine or foliar spray with triclopyr ester or triclopyr amine plus a non-ionic surfactant have all been successful.

Credits

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