Midwest Invasive Species Information Network

Winter creeper

Euonymus fortunei

Description

Introduced as an ornamental groundcover.

Habit

Evergreen, woody, clinging perennial vine; forms dense groundcover or shrub to 3 ft in height or climb 40-70 ft high vertical surfaces with the aid of aerial roots.

Leaves

Dark green or green-white variegated, glossy, opposite, thick, egg-shaped, 1 in - 2 1/2 in long, toothed margins with silvery veins; occurs in pairs.

Stems

Narrow, warty and have rootlets or trailing roots.

Flowers

Forms clusters, 5 parted, green-white flowers are produced on long stalks; blooms June through July.

Fruits and Seeds

Source: MISIN. 2024. Midwest Invasive Species Information Network. Michigan State University - Applied Spatial Ecology and Technical Services Laboratory. Available online at https://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail.php?id=151.

Flowers form small round pink-red capsules that split open to expose seeds with red-orange arils.

Habitat

Native to China, Japan and Korea. Found in areas of poor soils, full sun to dense shade, and a wide pH range; very versatile.

Reproduction

Spreads vegetatively with the help of lateral shoots produced along its long main branches and by new plants that emerge from rootlets also producing along the stem at short intervals.

Similar

Native Partridge berry (Mitchella repens); the invasive Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica); and common periwinkle (Vinca minor).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Grubbing is effective for small populations or environmentally sensitive areas. Juvenile plants can be hand-pulled when soil is moist. Wet all leaves thoroughly with one of the following herbicides in water with a surfactant (July to October for successive years); Repeatedly apply triclopyr aster or a glyphosate herbicide as a 4% solution in water with a surfactant, a less effective treatment that has no soil activity to damage surrounding plants. Early spring cutting and spraying effective.

Credits

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