

## Bittersweet nightshade

### *Solanum dulcamara*

#### Description

All parts of the plant are toxic, containing the chemical Solanine. This plant was likely intentionally introduced to the United States from Europe as an ornamental or for medicinal reasons. Became widespread by the late 1800s. This species is listed under <https://www.michigan.gov/mdard/plant-pest/plant-health-certification-and-export/seed> Regulation No. 715 - Seed Law Implementation as a restricted noxious weed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

#### Habit

Trailing or climbing perennial woody vine, grows up to 10 ft in length.

#### Leaves

Simple, alternate, 2-4 in in length, broadly ovate often with basal lobes, dark green above and lighter below in color, hairless with entire margins, unpleasant odor when bruised or





crushed.

### **Stems**

Stiff stems are erect to clambering; purple above and greenish below; hollow pith and single bundle scar; unpleasant odor when bruised or crushed.

### **Flowers**

Develop during the summer as hanging clusters of bright purple petals (occasionally white) with yellow anthers.

### **Fruits and Seeds**

Hanging clusters of bright red berries ripen in autumn and are oval, 3/8-1/2 in long and contain numerous seeds.

### **Habitat**

Native to Eurasia. Grows well in moist disturbed sites, thickets, roadsides, fence rows, woods, cliffs, marshes, and pond and river banks.

### **Reproduction**

By seed and fruits.

### **Similar**

Eastern black nightshade (*Solanum ptycanthum*) but is an annual with an upright growth habit, and has wavy leaf margins and black berries.

### **Monitoring and Rapid Response**

Use gloves and/or protective gear when handling plant; Small infestations can be manually pulled, dug out or cut back, mowing may control but repeated mowing may be necessary. Effectively controlled



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using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopr.

### **Credits**

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