



FRIGHTENING FACTS

South Carolina and North Carolina Exotic Plant Pest Councils



SCIENTIFIC NAME: *CELASTRUS ORBICULATUS*
COMMON NAME: ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET
KNOWN TO OCCUR IN NC AND SC

WHAT IS ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET?

Plant Type: Deciduous, climbing, woody vine

Form/Size: Can grow to lengths of 60 ft., stem can grow to 2-4 inches thick.

Leaves: Light green, alternate, elliptical, toothed, 2-5 inches long.

Flowers: Small, inconspicuous, whitish-greenish, axillary, bloom in spring.

Fruit: round and green initially, ripen to yellow and split to show bright red berries that persist into winter.

Means of Spread: Prolific seed producer, seeds dispersed widely and quickly by birds eating the berries, vegetatively by suckering.

Family: Celastraceae

Similar Species: Resembles American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), but can be distinguished because American bittersweet has flowers and fruits at the ends of branches, rather than in the axils of the leaves. Also, Am. Bittersweet leaves are nearly twice as long as wide and are tapered at each end.



WHERE DID ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET COME FROM?

Origin: Eastern Asia, China, Korea, Japan

Date of Introduction: 1860

Reason: As an ornamental



American Bittersweet (native)



WHERE AM I LIKELY TO FIND ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET?

Habitat Type: Through the southern Appalachians in old home sites, fields, road edges. Some shade tolerance allows it to also grow in open forests.

Distribution in SC: Greenville County

Distribution in NC: found in 14 counties along the Appalachians and in Hanover County on the coast.

Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) Species



FRIGHTENING FACTS

South Carolina and North Carolina Exotic Plant Pest Councils



WHY IS ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET A PROBLEM?



Environment: -Prolific vine growth allows it to wrap around trees and girdle them. Vines can completely cover native vegetation preventing photosynthesis; can out-compete and kill even large trees; can uproot trees with excessive weight, alters habitat structure for wildlife, degrades native habitats by reducing biodiversity.

-Can hybridize with American bittersweet, potentially leading to a loss of genetic identity.

Economy: -Has the potential to damage timber stands, can be expensive and time consuming to control.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET?

Report: Take a photo, GPS location if possible, report the observation to EDDMapS: <http://www.se-eppc.org/> (location, size of infestation, etc.). **In SC:** Send digital photo to John Nelson at the USC Herbarium:

plantman@herbarium.org for verification.

Control: Hand-pull before fruiting by the roots, remove from site. Herbicides including glyphosate or triclopyr have used with success. A combination of manual and chemical methods works for small infestations, foliar chemical application may be required for large infestations.

Disposal: Bag material and dispose in landfill or allow bags to bake in the sun long enough to kill seeds.

CURRENT LISTINGS:

State Noxious Weed in NC, MA, NH, NC, VT

SC-EPPC: Watch A/Vine

NC-EPPC/NCNPS: Severe Threat, NCDOT: Threat/Vine



LEARN MORE!

- Invasive.org (images and control information links): <http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=3012>
- US Geological Survey (American Bittersweet image): http://www.glsc.usgs.gov/_files/factsheets/2007-2%20Identifying%20Bittersweet.pdf
- USDA Forest Service: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/oriental-bittersweet.pdf
- Plant Conservation Alliance: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/ceor1.htm>

Prepared by Sudie Daves Thomas for SC-EPPC and Early Detection & Rapid Response System

Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) Species