

Porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)

DESCRIPTION:

Originally from eastern Asia, this grape-like woody vine is a new invader in the Midwest, having so far been reported only in Dane and Milwaukee Counties in Wisconsin. It is considered prohibited by the DNR, meaning that populations discovered within the state should be destroyed. It was originally used as an ornamental ground cover in part because it has attractive pastel blue and white berries. It has shown itself to be invasive and spread from cultivation by vegetative spread and the berries are also spread by birds. It is an aggressive climbing vine that can quickly reach the tree canopy, with the potential to overtop and shade out the host tree. It can also spread along the ground to blanket areas and exclude all other plant life.

IDENTIFICATION:

Leaf shape is highly variable, ranging from leaves with three shallow lobes and a serrated edge, to five deeply-lobed, asymmetrical leaves. The berries are pastel blue and purple with speckles. Young stems are covered in erect hairs. Mature stems are woody.

A member of the grape family, porcelain berry is very similar to wild grape (*Vitis riparia*) and particularly like summer grape (*V. aestivalis*) which are both native. Note that the underside of leaves on summer grape is strongly whitened, a feature lacking in porcelain berry. Wild grape has flaky strips of bark on larger vines, a feature lacking in porcelain berry. Also when looking at a cut stem, wild grape has a dark pith, whereas porcelain berry does not.

CONTROL METHODS:

Organic: We strongly recommend chemical control for this species to insure the entire root system is killed. If you wish to control it without herbicide, you should thoroughly grub out the entire root system, put the roots in a plastic bag and dispose of them in the trash.

Chemical: Either glyphosate (Round-Up®) or triclopyr (Garlon®, Pathfinder II) may be used to control porcelain berry. Triclopyr is preferred because it is broadleaf specific and may be more effective at translocating to kill the entire root system. We recommend cutting the plant as close to the ground as possible and apply herbicide to the cut stump to limit collateral damage to neighboring plants. A foliar spray application can also be used in areas where it has formed a monoculture. Read the product label and follow application instructions when applying any pesticide.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

Wild grape and Virginia creeper are native vines which produce edible fruit eaten by birds and have colorful fall foliage. These vines do have potential to be aggressive, though not destructively invasive. Therefore care must be taken before planting any vine and when considering managing natural communities.

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Photo by: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

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