



INVASIVE PLANTS OF OHIO

Fact Sheet 9 Japanese Honeysuckle & Asian Bittersweet

Lonicera japonica, *Celastrus orbiculatus*

JAPANESE HONEYSUCKLE



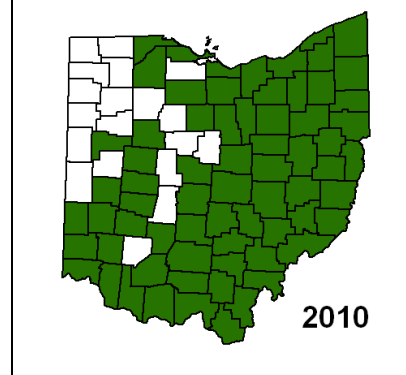
DESCRIPTION:

Japanese honeysuckle is a vine with entire (sometimes lobed), oval-oblong, opposite leaves from 1 ½ -3 inches long. In Ohio, the plants are semi-evergreen with leaves persisting into late winter or early spring. The stems are usually hairy and hollow, reaching a length of 30 or more feet. Flowers are tubular, with five fused petals, white to pink, turning yellow with age, very fragrant, and occur in pairs along the stem at leaf junctures from April through June. The many-seeded black fruit is pulpy and

matures in autumn. Identification is essential to avoid confusion with the native honeysuckle vines (*L. dioica*, *L. reticulata*); the native species bear fruit at the ends of stems and the upper leaves of the stem are joined together.

Asian or Oriental bittersweet is a vine with finely-toothed, rounded, alternate leaves, up to 4 inches long. The stems often have noticeable lenticels and may reach a length of 60 feet. Plants produce small greenish flowers in axillary clusters (from most leaf axils), and each plant can produce large numbers of fruits. The fruit is a conspicuous, yellow, 3-valved capsule that splits open at maturity revealing three red-orange seeds. The increasingly rare native bittersweet (*C. scandens*) can be distinguished by its elliptical-shaped leaves and the flowers and fruit which arise at the tips of stems. American bittersweet has fewer, larger clusters of fruits, whereas Oriental bittersweet is a prolific fruit producer with multiple fruit clusters emerging at many points along the stem. Unfortunately, hybrids of the two species occur which may make accurate identification more difficult.

JAPANESE HONEYSUCKLE



Japanese honeysuckle was introduced to New York in 1806 as an ornamental plant, for erosion control and wildlife forage and cover. Cultivars of Japanese honeysuckle are available. Asian bittersweet is native to eastern Asia and was introduced into the U.S. in the 1860s as an ornamental plant. It is often associated with old homesites, from which it has escaped into surrounding natural areas. Oriental bittersweet is still widely planted and maintained as an ornamental vine, further promoting its spread.

HABITAT:

Both Japanese honeysuckle and Asian bittersweet thrive in disturbed areas such as roadsides, fencerows, forest edges, and forest gaps. Areas of special concern are woodland edges, early successional forests, and riparian corridors. Although preferring sunny areas, both are shade tolerant and can live in marginal habitats until favorable conditions arise.

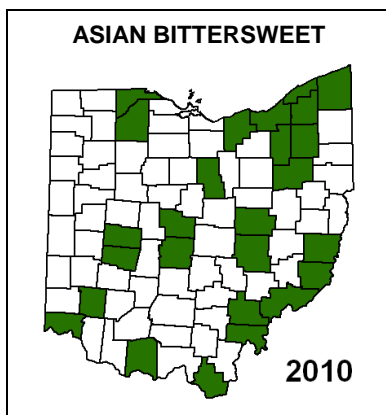
INVASIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

Japanese honeysuckle and Asian bittersweet are fast-growing trailing or climbing woody vines capable of covering large areas of ground or extending into the treetops. They can severely damage native plant populations by limiting available sunlight, constricting nutrient flowing stems and weighing down treetops which increases the likelihood of wind damage. Both are prolific seed producers; seeds are often dispersed by birds. The root systems are very persistent and capable of extensive root suckering.



CONTROL:

Mechanical: Hand-pulling can be effective for small populations. Care must be taken to remove the entire plant, including the roots; all plant materials should be bagged and taken off-site. Plants can also be cut or mowed, but they should be cut low as they may re-sprout; repeated cutting or mowing is usually needed for effective control.



Chemical:

Foliar application of systemic herbicides such as Roundup, AquaNeat, Razor, Accord, and Rodeo can be very effective, especially if applied in the early spring or late fall when other native vegetation is dormant (to minimize impacts on non-target plants). Some herbicides are approved for wetland/aquatic use (e.g., Aquaneat, Accord, Rodeo), while others should only be used in upland sites. The most effective treatment time occurs after flowering/seed set and before the plant goes dormant for the winter. To be most effective, many herbicides require a penetrating or sticking agent such as Nu-Film- P.

Biological:

No biological controls are currently available for Japanese honeysuckle or Asian bittersweet.

Credits and additional information:

Plant Conservation Alliance-Alien Plant Working Group
Ohio Department of Natural Resources, www.ohiodnr.gov
The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Chapter
OIPC website, www.oipc.info

Note: Maps of species' ranges are based on records as of 2010.