

Bittersweet Vine

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

DESCRIPTION

Round leaf bittersweet is a woody vine that invades and kills trees or smothers open ground. It grows up to 15 ft/year, reaching a 6" diameter. It has orange roots.

Its fruit grow in clusters along the stems, starting as yellow capsules before splitting open to reveal an orange-red interior.

In contrast, native American bittersweet fruits at the ends of stems and orange capsule covers.

WHY IS IT BAD?

Bittersweet invades fields, field edges, fence lines, and forests, forming dense mats that smother trees and shrubs. It wraps around trunks and branches to climb, girdling them as grows. The weight of a vine can rip down tree limbs and crowns.



DISTRIBUTION & SPREAD

This invasive species spreads in two ways: Birds spread the highly viable seeds far and wide after consuming fruit and roots sprout new growth along their length and can re-sprout from cuttings.



WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

- *Once roots are established, bittersweet is difficult to remove from landscapes.*
- *Bittersweet causes damage to trees and shrubs by girdling, smothering, and weighing them down.*
- *Exotic bittersweet displaces native plants and destroys habitats.*

MORE INFO ON THE BACK!



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How to Treat

CONTROL METHODS

Surveillance is critical make sure to look up into trees, especially in the fall when the green leaf color will be at maximum contrast against native tree foliage.

Communicate with neighbors collaborative efforts are essential given that bittersweet tends to climb into trees from across borders.

Start with Manual Control - hand pulling smaller vines and removing all root material. Cut large vines as high as you can and just above ground level.

HERBICIDE METHOD*

- Painting a freshly cut stem with a concentrated systemic herbicide will help reduce regrowth.
- For low growing thickets or re-growth apply a **3-to-5% solution of a glyphosate-based herbicide** to thoroughly wet all foliage, but not to the point of runoff.

**Follow herbicide labels.*

NON-HERBICIDE METHOD

- Cut regrowth back repeatedly during the growing season to exhaust the root system.
- This method needs to be **continued for 3-4 years for complete removal.**



POST-TREATMENT

VINE AND ROOT PLANT MATERIALS

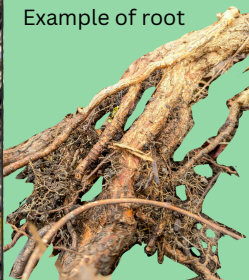
- **Do not pull cut vines from trees.** Pulling may damage trees & vines will dry out and fall on their own.
- **Vines and root** cuttings should be elevated of the ground or they may reroot. Place vines on the top of a covered brush pile, on asphalt, tarps, or in heavy duty trash bags.
- Keep materials bagged/covered until completely dry or rotten.
- Once dead, the material can be disposed of in your household trash or yard waste pickup - **don't dispose of fresh cuttings in your yard waste, as it will spread bittersweet to new locations.**

FRUIT AND SEEDS

- Target the vine before September when fruit is present if possible.
- If fruit is present, make sure it is bagged and kept at temps above 131°F for at least a week.



Example of root



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