

Impacts: Oriental bittersweet is an aggressive, woody vine that climbs and smothers vegetation, causing it to die from lack of sunlight. Plants can also break from the weight of the bittersweet. It has been known to climb high on trees, increasing their weight enough to cause uprooting and blow-over during high winds and heavy snowfalls. Oriental bittersweet is also displacing our native bittersweet through competition. It has the ability to hybridize between the two, as well.



Suspected Means of Introduction: Oriental bittersweet was introduced to the U.S. in the mid 1800's as an ornamental.

BioBullies

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus



Description: Oriental bittersweet is a deciduous perennial plant that grows as a climbing woody vine, reaching 60 feet in length. The stems can grow up to 4 inches in diameter. Its leaves are alternate, glossy, toothed, and almost equal in width and length. Female plants produce inconspicuous greenish-white flowers in axillary clusters, with each plant producing large numbers of seeds and fruits. When mature, the yellow, globular fruit capsules split open to reveal three fleshy, red-orange arils, each containing one or two seeds. Bittersweet is often used in floral arrangements because of the showy fruits.

Native Range:
Eastern Asia, Korea,
China and Japan

Resources for Identification and Control of Oriental Bittersweet

Plant Invaders of
Mid-Atlantic Natural
Areas – National Park
Service and U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

Weed of the Week - USDA
Forest Service

Plant Profile Database -
USDA

Invasive.org
University of GA, US Forest
Service, USDA APHIS

PA Field Guide - Common
Invasive Plants in Riparian
Areas

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus



Habitat: Oriental bittersweet can be found along forest edges, woodlands, fields, hedgerows, and mostly anywhere there was some form of land disturbance. Its tolerance of shade allows it to invade forested areas.

Biology: Oriental bittersweet reproduces primarily by seed, which is readily dispersed to new areas by many species of birds. The seeds germinate in late spring. It also can expand

vegetatively through the root system.

Control Methods: Oriental bittersweet can be controlled by hand pulling small plants. Being sure to remove the roots, or new plants will emerge from root systems left behind. For a larger plant you should cut at 4 to 5 feet and again at ground level. If needed you can use herbicide. However, when using herbicides, read the label and follow all state and federal requirements.