

Invasive Alert

Porcelain Berry

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata



Description:

A perennial climbing vine with often deeply lobed, grape-like leaves, which are sometimes variegated. Both the undersides of the leaves and the young twigs are hairy to the touch. Tiny yellow blooms in mid-summer are followed by clusters of shiny, hard berries in various shades of white, yellow, lilac, or green that mature to a bright turquoise blue.

History:

Porcelain Berry was introduced from northeast Asia in the 1870's for ornamental use on estates. It is still being sold at garden centers for its ornamental appeal.

The Problem:

Porcelain Berry, which is spread by birds, colonizes primarily disturbed areas along roads, fields, and gaps in forests. It is a vigorous vine that can quickly overwhelm trees and shrubs, forming blankets of growth that reduce plant species diversity and weaken trees so they become vulnerable to wind damage. In addition to the high germination rate of seeds this plant also reproduces vegetatively from stem or root segments. It outcompetes native species for water and nutrients.

Control:

Porcelain Berry is very difficult to control because the extensive root system cannot be completely eradicated. Hand pulling should be done before the the plant goes to fruit to avoid scattering the seeds. Be aware that the roots are probably entwined with desirable species which may be damaged by pulling Porcelain Berry out by the roots. Instead, pulling the vines from trees and repeatedly cutting or mowing the remaining plants will help control its spread. Shading it out with trees in conjunction with repeated cutting may also help eliminate it. Foliar application of herbicides may also be partially effective but it is difficult to target porcelain berry vines without damaging other plants. Treat with herbicides at the end of the growing season when nutrients are flowing from the leaves to the roots.

Alternatives:

There are many substitutes including grape, climbing roses, and many varieties of clematis.