

Invasive Alien Plant Species of Virginia

Porcelain-berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* (Maxim.) Trautv.)

Description

Porcelain-berry is a deciduous, climbing vine of the grape family which can grow, with support, to a height of 16 feet. It is related to two North American *Ampelopsis* species, raccoon-grape and pepper-vine. The leaves of porcelain-berry are bright green, slightly hairy on the underside, and often deeply lobed with three to five lobes per leaf. Young twigs are also hairy to the touch. The unusual fruits of porcelain-berry, however, distinguish it from similar species. This fruit is also the feature that may be responsible for its introduction to North America. The fruit is hard, with the appearance of porcelain, and changes in color from white to a series of pastel shades of yellow, lilac, and green before finally turning a sky blue. All the colors can often be found on a single fruit cluster.

Habitat

Porcelain-berry is a hardy species that can adapt to a variety of environmental conditions. It grows well in most soils but is especially successful in moist, slightly shady areas along stream banks, and in thickets.

Distribution

A native of northeast Asia, porcelain-berry was cultivated in North America as an ornamental bedding and screening plant. It spread into natural areas when birds ate the berries and spread the seeds in their droppings. Once established in the wild, this prolific vine spread along the East Coast from New England to North Carolina and west to Ontario and Michigan. Locally, it has been documented in ten counties in northern and central Virginia.

Threats

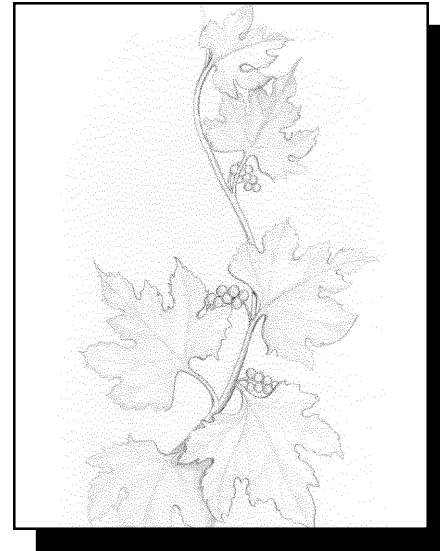
The very features that make porcelain-berry attractive as a landscape plant also make it a problem in natural areas. Although relatively slow to estab-

lish, it grows quickly and, once established, is tenacious and can be difficult to remove. It is relatively insect and disease resistant, and can outcompete native species for water and nutrients. The thick mats of porcelain-berry, which are so attractive to landscapers, spatially usurp other plants.

Control

Surprisingly, this invasive plant is still popular in the horticultural trade. The most effective control is removal from commercial trade and the use of alternative plants for landscaping and gardening. Some alternative species include trumpet honeysuckle, goldflame honeysuckle and jackman clematis.

Where removal of porcelain-berry is necessitated, hand pulling the plants should be done before the plant is in fruit to avoid scattering seeds. Because the roots of porcelain-berry plants often merge with shrubs or other desirable vegetation, this type of manual removal is difficult in well established patches without damaging the desirable



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vegetation as well. If hand pulling is not feasible, porcelain-berry may be removed by the spot application of glyphosphate herbicides to individual plants. As glyphosphate is a non-selective herbicide, it should be used sparingly so as not to contact desirable plants growing with porcelain-berry. Herbicide treatment is most effective when applied toward the end of the growing season when plants are actively transporting nutrients from stems and leaves to root systems. As with manual removal of plants, follow-up treatments may be needed in subsequent years to remove plants which have sprouted from seeds remaining in the soil.

Reference

Spangler, R. L. 1977. Landscape Plants for the Central and Northeastern United States Including Lower and Eastern Canada. Burgess Publishing Company, U.S.A. 506 pp.

For more information, contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation, or the Virginia Native Plant Society.



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