

Climbing spindle berry

Celastrus orbiculatus

Family

Celastraceae (spindle tree)

Also known as

Oriental bittersweet, *Celastrus scandens*

Where is it originally from?

Eastern Asia, Korea, China and Japan

What does it look like?

Deciduous, hairless climber (<12 m high) with suckering roots, round, woody, layering, greyish brown stems and young green twigs that often have sharp spines (1-2 mm). Roundish, finely serrated leaves (5-10cm long) alternate on the stem and turn yellow before falling. Pale green insignificant flowers are followed by round yellow to orange seed capsules (6-8 mm diameter) that expose fleshy scarlet seed coverings.

Why is it weedy?

Grows rapidly, has a scrambling habit, suckering roots, and stems that take root when they touch the ground. Well dispersed seeds are viable for 2-5 years. Tolerates hot to very cold temperatures, shade (where seeds germinate best), and high to moderately low rainfall.

How does it spread?

Seeds are spread by birds, possibly possums and other mammals.

What damage does it do?

Stems strangle host and climb to the top of most canopies, causing them to collapse. Stems in contact with the ground take root, forming dense, forming impenetrable thickets.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Disturbed and intact bush, shrubland, and bush margins.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out: Dispose of as much as possible either at refuse transfer station or by burning.
2. Stump and stem swab (spring-summer): Cut and dispose of most stems. Slice and treat both ends of remaining stems: glyphosate (250ml/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L).
3. Spray (spring-summer): overall spray with glyphosate (150ml/10L + penetrant) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L + penetrant) or triclopyr 600 EC (20ml/10L + penetrant). For large stands, best to cut and dispose of stems in autumn, and spray regrowth in spring.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Hard to kill as stumps and suckers resprout and dropped stems take root. Maintain at least 6 monthly follow up until eliminated.



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Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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