

Japanese Barberry - Widespread in our watershed now

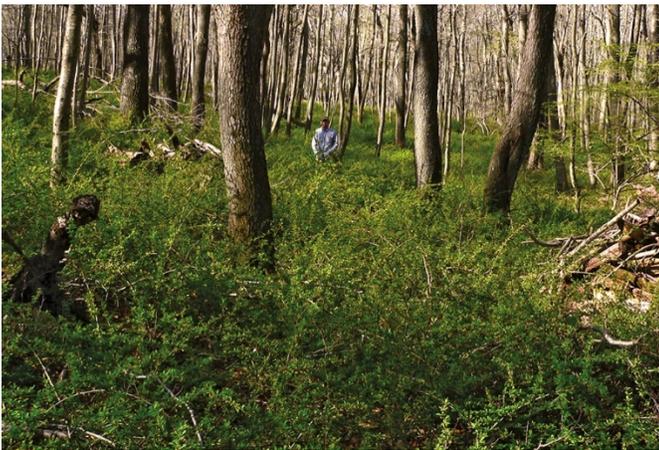
Impact- aggressive non-native, spreads rapidly, forms dense thickets and crowds out native understory plants. Barberry is unpalatable for local wildlife and serves as a deer tick habitat and is implicated in the spread of Lyme Disease.



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What is Japanese Barberry? A dense deciduous spiny shrub, 2-8 ft tall with small oval to spoon shaped green, yellow or purple leaves with smooth margins that turn red in fall. It has tiny pale yellow dangling flowers that hang in clusters of 2-4 nodes that bloom in April and May. Grows well in bright sun or shade. It spreads by seed, clonal shoots below ground and by the tips of its branches where they touch the ground. Spreads long distances into forests by birds.

How to identify Arching branches are grey with sharp thorns. Yellow inner wood of roots & stems. Berries-bright red oval shaped. Leaves out early and retains its leaves late into fall. Small oval to spoon shaped leaves with smooth margins arranged in clusters around the stem.



Control / What to do / Help- Fairly easy to control. Small plants -dig and burn before seed dispersal but entire root system must be removed as they will re-sprout. It has shallow roots which are easy to pull but remove the root crown as well. Wear gloves. Larger plants require foliar herbicide treatment such as Glyphosate or Triclopyr once the barberry is fully leafed out. Be sure to read instructions.

A “non-herbicide” solution is to use a foliar 1 gal. spray mixture: 75 % of 20 to 30 % concentrated vinegar and 25 % water, 1/2 cup salt and 1/4 cup dishwasher soap is effective. Cover all stems and leaves. Be careful- vinegar is acidic- wear appropriate eye protection and safety clothing. Make sure all leaves are covered but avoid overspray. High % vinegar typically is not found in grocery stores but can be purchased on line. One commercial product is Green Gobbler. Avoid spraying during windy or damp or rainy conditions.