

In Your Woods?

A large infestation has been discovered in the outlying areas of the City of Wabasha. Japanese Barberry is already on the prohibited list of plants and shrubs in many Eastern states. Japanese barberry is invasive and destructive. It can form thick stands and exclude nearly all native plants. The seeds can be spread for long distances by birds and this is estimated to be the main cause of the spread in the Wabasha area. Please do not contribute to the problem by planting Japanese barberry in your yard!



Japanese Barberry has bright red fall foliage.

**Wabasha
Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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Japanese Barberry Threatening Local Woodlands



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Woodland Invader

Japanese barberry is a dense, deciduous, spiny shrub that grows 2 to 8 feet high. The brown branches are deeply grooved and they zigzag somewhat. At each node there is a single very sharp spine. Leaves are small (1/2 to 1 1/2 inches long) and oval to spatula shaped. The leaves can be green, bluish-green, or dark reddish purple. Flowering takes place in mid-April to May. The flowers are pale yellow and about 1/4 inch across. They hang in umbrella shaped clusters of 2-4 flowers along the length of the stem. Fruits are bright red oblong berries that mature during late summer and fall and last through the winter.



Japanese barberry was originally introduced as an ornamental plant and has been cultivated for many years. A number of cultivars exist. They have been widely used in landscaping applications. It is shade tolerant, drought resistant, and adaptable to a variety of open and wooded habitats. While it prefers full sun to part shade, it will flower and fruit even in heavy shade.

How it Spreads

Japanese barberry produces a large number of seeds which have as much as a 90% germination rate. The seed is transported to new locations by birds and small animals that eat it. Seeds are dispersed by birds sitting on power lines or trees at forest edges. It takes advantage of cleared and lumbered spaces and paths in woodlands or pastures to get started

Vegetative expansion can also take place. The branches touch the ground and can root to form new plants. Root fragments that remain in soil can sprout into new plants.

Why it's a problem

Japanese barberry forms dense stands in a variety of natural habitats, under forest canopy, open woodlands, wetlands, pastures, and meadows. It alters soil pH, nitrogen levels and biological activity in the soil. Once established it displaces native plants. It forms a natural fence that deer and cattle won't cross and they avoid browsing on it. The increase in pH and reduction to the depth of the litter layer in forests may affect drinking water quality. It also forms a habitat where lyme disease carrying deer ticks thrive and their population number increase by nearly 10 times.

Management

Pull and dispose of individual plants on site. Plan to re-check locations for re-growth from roots or new plants from seed. Larger infestations can be managed by cutting and chemical treatment of the stumps, foliar spraying, or controlled burning. Combinations of these practices may be appropriate for your situation.



Imposters



Mutiflora Rose is commonly mistaken for Japanese barberry

Chokeberries can have black or red berries. Leaves turn a similar red in the fall.



Another woodland shrub that could be mistaken for Japanese barberry is **Gooseberry**.

Need Help?

If you would like help identifying whether or not you have Japanese barberry or other woodland exotics, please call the Wabasha Soil & Water Conservation District, (651)565-4673. Resources available are possible technical and financial assistance, list of vendors or technical service providers, current research and findings, and management options.