

## A Beginner's Guide to Invasive Plant Identification in Clarke County, Virginia



### VINES

#### **Oriental Bittersweet *Celastrus orbiculatus***

A woody vine without tendrils. Has round, semi-toothed leaves. Leaves are 2"-5". Flowers are small, green, and clustered. Fruits yellow-red in autumn. Can climb up to 60". Compare with native American Bittersweet which has more oval, tapered leaves; do not confuse with Kudzu or Mile-a Minute (see herbaceous plants, p.).

#### **Japanese Honey suckle *Lonicera japonica***

Perennial vine often found climbing over fences and trees. Lower leaves are often lobed/ Twigs and Leaves are densely hairy. Fruits in autumn are black.



## SHRUBS

### **Bush Honeysuckle *Lonicera spp.***

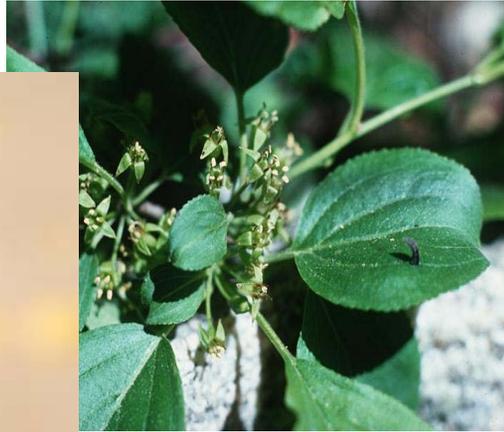
Leaves are oval or oblong; end tapers to one side. Leaves differ from Japanese Honeysuckle, but flowers are similar.

Distinguished from native honeysuckles by hollow pith in older shrubs. Fruits orange to red in autumn. Is a stout, erect shrub, 3'-10' in height.

### **Autumn Olive *Elaeagnus umbellata***

Has alternate leaves that are simple and oval.

Leaves are gray-green underneath and appear silvery from a distance. Flowers come in clusters of 1 to 8, are white to light yellow, and have 4 petals and 4 stamens. Autumn fruits are red with silvery coating. Grows up to 20' tall.



## SHRUBS CONT.

### **Common Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica***

Medium size to large shrub, with twigs ending in sharp spines. Has elliptic, small-toothed leaves. Has dark, berry-like fruits. Can grow to a height of 16'-26'. Glossy Buckthorn, *Rhamnus frangula*, is similar to *R. cathartica* except its leaves are hairy underneath and have no teeth, and twigs have no spines.

### **Multiflora Rose *Rosa multiflora***

Stems are similar to a garden rose. 5-11 elliptic leaflets, each 1' long. Has flexible stems with rigid thorns, and white (or slightly pink) flowers. Red fruits, or rosehips, develop in summer.



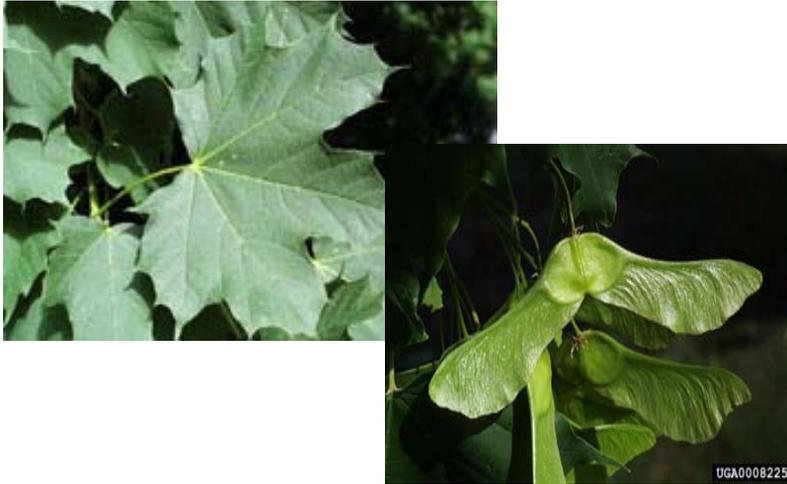
## TREES

### **Tree-of-Heaven *Ailanthus altissima***

Very large, distinctive leaves with 11-40 leaflets. Leaves smell like peanut butter when crushed. Buds are small, brown and woolly. Has a gray, brown bark, with narrow, light color groves. Can reach 100' in height.

### **Empress Tree *Paulownia tomentosa***

Medium sized tree with large, paired heart shaped leaves. Leaves are velvety beneath and have shallow, heart shaped base. Purple flowers with yellow stripes in large clusters. Has clusters of nut like fruits. Bark is rough with interlaced smooth, shiny areas.



## TREES CONT.

### **Norway maple *Acer platanoides***

Tree with 5 main lobes on leaves. Winged seeds grow out from each other, whereas seeds of the Red maple grow near one another. Has more lobes than Sugar Maple and when leaf stalk is broken, it has a milky juice.

### **Red maple *Acer rubrum*– NOT Invasive!**

Often confused with Norway Maple. Bark is smooth and gray when young, or broken and darker when old. Twigs and buds are reddish, and leaves are 2”-8”. Height can be 20’-40’. Seeds are reddish from May to July. Note the difference from the Norway Maple. Leaves are more serrated than Norway Maple and other maples. Don’t confuse with Silver Maple which has a silver backing and more defined lobes.



## TREES CONT.

### ***Evodia Evodia danielli***

Tree with foliage similar to an ash tree; leaf is folded upward . In late July has large, flat, white to gray clusters and small, white flowers. Has distinctive smooth, gray bark, and grows up to 30'.



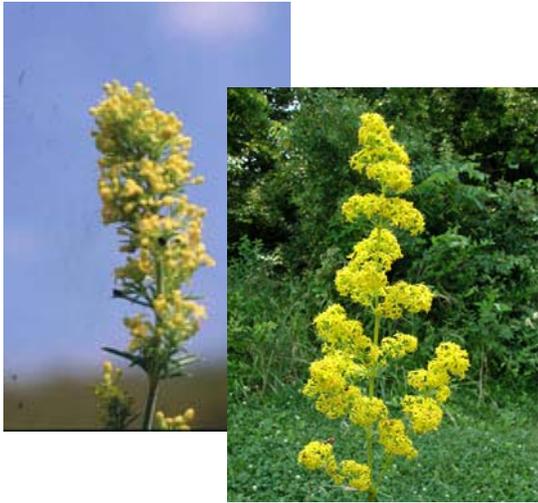
## HERBACEOUS PLANTS (FIELD EARLY SEASON)

### ***Mile-a-Minute Polygonum perfoliatum***

Prickly, spreading vine that can grow up to 20' long; A.K.A. Devil's Tail Tearthumb. Note the Arrowhead shaped leaves. Not to be confused with Kudzu (pictured right) which has rounded leaves.

### **Kudzu**





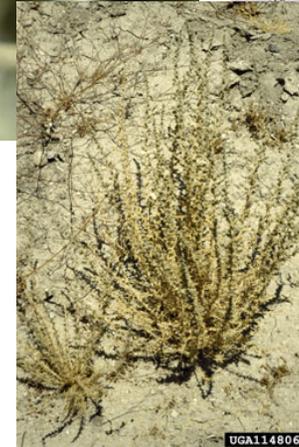
## HERBACEOUS PLANTS (FIELD LATE SEASON)

### **Yellow Bedstraw** *Galium verum*

Has linear leaves in rosettes of 6 to 8 (a star leaves). Has four-lobed flowers that are fragrant. 8"-30' tall.

### **Johnson Grass** *Sorghum halepense*

Lance-like leaves are long (2') and are arranged of alternately along a branching stem. Overall plant height of 3-4' tall. Flowers occur in a purplish, branched cluster.



## HERBACEOUS PLANTS (FIELD LATE SEASON)

### **Bull Thistle *Cirsium vulgare***

Tall, spiny, winged stems (up to 7 feet tall) have many spreading stems. Leaves are long (3 to 12 inches), lance-shaped and very hairy. Has large purple flower heads (1-2 in) with narrow spine-tipped bracts. A.K.A Common thistle and Spear thistle.

### **Russian Thistle *Salsola kali***

Mature plants look like the skeleton of a normal shrub. May be as small as a soccer ball or as large as car. Flowers are small and green and can be found where the leaves branch off from the stems. A.K.A. Prickly Russian Thistle, Wind witch, and Tumbleweed



## HERBACEOUS PLANTS (FOREST EARLY SEASON)

### **Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata***

1'-3' height. Has heart shaped leaves (1st year), or toothed triangular shaped leaves (2nd year). 1st year leaves, when crushed, smell of garlic. 2nd year plants may have small white flowers on top.



## HERBACEOUS PLANTS (FOREST LATE SEASON)

### **Japanese Stilt Grass *Microstegium vimineum***

Look for tall, lanky grass. Has skinny stems with grass-like leaves sticking out. 2'-3' height. Appears like a tall, spaced-out grass

## ONLINE SOURCES:

<http://www.invasive.org>

The Source for Information and Images of Invasive & Exotic Species

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm>

Weeds Gone Wild: Alien Plant Invaders of Natural Areas; is a web-based project of the Plant Conservation Alliance's Alien Plant Working Group through the National Park Service

<http://plants.usda.gov>

The PLANTS database through the US Department of Agriculture

<http://www.ct-botanical-society.org/index.html>

Photos and information provided by the Connecticut Botanical Society