
**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINE: Wintercreeper or
Climbing Euonymus (*Euonymus
fortunei*)**

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Wintercreeper or climbing euonymus is a very aggressive, perennial, woody vine that climbs on rocks and trees. It tolerates full sun, heavy shade, and most soil moisture conditions, except extremely wet conditions. It appears to be spread by birds that eat its seeds.

This exotic species persists after being planted at home sites. It has spread into several types of forest, including floodplain, mesic, and dry-mesic forests. It invades natural openings and relatively undisturbed forests. It can proliferate over ground and vegetation in many places, actually eliminating native groundcover species in mesic and dry-mesic woods. It is a serious potential threat, because it spreads so rapidly and replaces spring ephemerals.

In high-quality natural areas, small populations of wintercreeper can be controlled by pulling individual vines up by the roots and removing the vines from the area by hand. Large populations of wintercreeper should be cut by hand and each cut stem sprayed with Roundup (a formulation of glyphosate) just after the last killing frost. Although the Roundup label recommends a 50-100% concentration of Roundup for stump treatment, a 20% concentration has proven effective. A squirt bottle may be used for spot treatment, or else individual stumps can be painted using a sponge applicator.

Herbicide treatment should be in late autumn, when most native vegetation is dormant, and prior to emergence of spring

ephemerals. Herbicide should not be used during the growing season, when spring ephemerals and other native species are likely to be affected. Care should be taken to avoid contacting nontarget species with the herbicide. By law, herbicides may be applied on public properties only according to label instructions and by licensed herbicide applicators or operators.

The most effective maintenance control technique is to totally eradicate the species from the natural area and surrounding vicinity where possible. Invading individuals should be pulled and removed as soon as possible after recognition.

On severely disturbed sites with large infestations, foliar spraying with Crossbow (mixture of 2,4-D and triclopyr) in autumn after the first frost can reduce the population. Crossbow should be mixed according to label instructions for foliar application and applied as a foliar spray. Spraying should be prior to emergence of spring ephemerals. Care should be used to avoid contacting nontarget plants with herbicide. The chemical should be applied while backing away from the treated area to avoid walking through the wet herbicide.

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Dirr, M.A. 1977. Manual of woody landscape plants: their identification, ornamental characteristics, culture, propagation, and uses. Stipes Publishing Co., Champaign, Ill. 536 p.
- Schwegman, J.E. 1988. Exotic invaders. Outdoor Highlights (mid-March): 6-11.