

JAPANESE BARBERRY

Berberis thunbergii



Nps.gov/plants/alien

Mature Height	2 to 8 feet	Soil Type	All types
Mature Spread	Continuous	Flower Color	Pale Yellow
Mature Form	Open Spreading	Foliage Color	Green
Growth Rate	Fast	Fall Color	Reddish Purple
Sun Exposure	Sun to Shade	Fruits	Bright Red
Soil Moisture	Prefers moist but is drought resistant		

Japanese Barberry is a dense, spiny, deciduous shrub that when it escapes from cultivation is highly invasive and damaging to natural ecosystems. It forms dense stands in woodland areas as shown in the photo below where it shades and outcompetes all natural vegetation. It can also be found invading pastures, open land, marshes and roadsides. Once established it shades out native plants and almost eliminates wildlife from the area. Deer will not browse it and move on to native trees damaging them for future timber purposes. Smaller plants can be controlled by removal of the plant and all roots. Regrowth from root fragments is a problem. Larger areas are best treated with a systemic herbicide containing glyphosate or triclopyr as a foliar sprayer or treatment of cut stumps.

Common or European Barberry is a similar invasive plant that has the additional concern of being the alternate host for black stem rust of small grains. Control measures are the same.



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This fact sheet was developed by the West Central Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) with funding by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. The CWMA consists of 27 western and central Indiana counties and strives to help land users identify and control invasive terrestrial plants through workshops, field days and other educational activities.

