



Bittersweet Nightshade

Solanum dulcamara L.

Common Names: amara dulcis, bittersweet, bitter nightshade, bittersweet nightshade, blue bindweed, blue nightshade, climbing nightshade, dwale, dulcamara, European bittersweet, fellenwort, fevertwig, morel, nightshade, poisonberry, poisonflower, pushion-berry, scarlet berry, skawcoo, snakeberry, tether-devil, violet-bloom, wolfgrape, woody nightshade

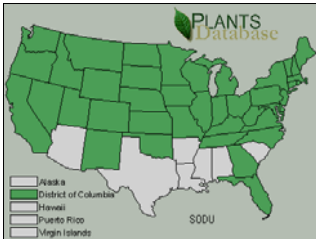
Native Origin: Eurasia

Description: A trailing or climbing perennial woody vine in the potato family (*Solanaceae*) growing up to 10 feet in length. The stiff stems are erect to clambering, purple above, greenish below, with a hollow pith and single bundle scar. Simple alternate leaves are 2 to 4 inches in length, broadly ovate often with basal lobes, dark green above and lighter below, and hairless with entire margins. Leaves and stems have an unpleasant odor when bruised or crushed. Flowers develop during summer as hanging clusters of bright purple petals (occasionally white) with yellow anthers. Hanging clusters of bright red berries ripen in autumn and are oval, 3/8 to 1/2 inch long and contain numerous seeds. The root system is made up of a taproot and rhizomes.



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Note: Eastern black nightshade (*Solanum ptycanthum*) is often confused with bittersweet nightshade, but is an annual with an upright growth habit, and has wavy leaf margins and black berries.



Habitat: Bittersweet nightshade is often found growing among non-native blackberries in parks and along un-maintained roadsides. It is located in moist disturbed sites, thickets, roadsides, fence rows, woods, cliffs, marshes, and pond and river banks.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CT, MA, MD, MI, OR, PA, WA, and WI.

Ecological Impacts: This low climbing sprawling vine often drapes low over trees and shrubs.

Toxicity: All parts of the plant are toxic. Humans, livestock and wildlife may be affected by toxins in this species. It causes generally non-fatal poisoning including gastrointestinitis, dermatitis and phyto-photosensitivity.



Control and Management: Because of possible toxicity, use gloves and/or protective gear when handling this species.

- **Manual-** Small infestations can be manually pulled, dug out or cut back. Pieces of the cut vines may resprout if left lying on the soil. Since the rhizomes are extensive and break easily be sure to remove all plant fragments from the site. Mowing may control, but repeated mowing several times each growing season may be necessary.
- **Chemical-** Large infestations can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Follow label and state requirements.

References: www.forestimages.org, <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, http://ipm.ppws.vt.edu/scott/weed_id/soldu.htm, <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/LANDS/Weeds/pdf/nightshade.pdf>, www.missouriplants.com/Bluealt/Solanum_dulcamara_page.html, <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/scripts/detail.asp?SpCode=SOLDUL>, www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/sdulcamara.htm, www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/herbhunters/nightshade.html, <http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Solanum+dulcamara>