

MILE-A-MINUTE VINE

(Devil's tearthumb)

Persicaria perfoliata

Status in Maine: not yet detected



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org | UGA5273091

Description: Vigorous herbaceous, annual vine. **Leaves:** Alternate, triangular, 1-3" long. Round, leaf-like structures called ocrea surround the stem at the base of the petiole. **Flowers:** Racemes of small, pale green, apetalous flowers are inconspicuous, and form from July to October. **Fruits:** Fleshy fruits the size of peas eventually turn blue when ripe. **Stem:** Glaucous green with numerous sharp barbs; up to 15-25' long. **Roots:** Fibrous and shallow.

Native range: India, China, Japan, Eastern Asia. **How arrived in U.S.:** Contaminant in imported nursery stock.

Reproduction: By seed, primarily self-pollinating. Blue fruits are eaten by birds and other wildlife. Fruits can float for 7-9 days and disperse long distances in streams and rivers. Seeds remain viable in the seed bank for several years.

Habitat: Open stream corridors, woodland edges, fence rows, recently cut timberlands, ditches, roadsides, and other disturbed areas. Favors moist soils and full sun. Vines will form dense tangles and overtake other vegetation.

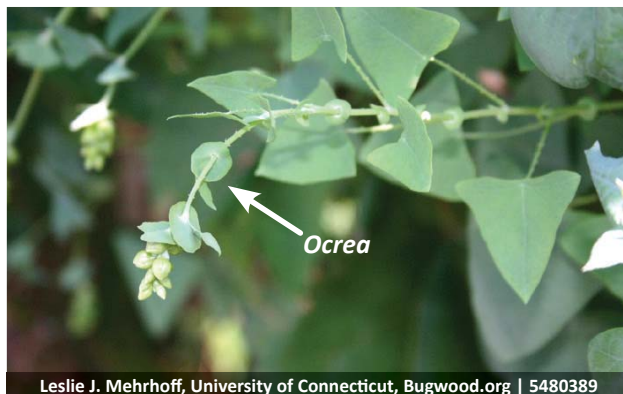
Similar native species: Halberd leaved tear-thumb (*Polygonum arifolium*) leaves are more narrowly triangular, and none perfoliate (surrounding the stem). Greenbriar (*Smilax* spp.) leaves are ovate, vine is stout, and thorns are large ~½". Fringed bindweed (*Fallopia cilioidis*) lacks barbs.

Similar non-native species: Black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) lacks barbs.



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Control methods: Vines can be pulled and rolled up in late spring and early summer before fruit formation (wear gloves!). Repeated mowing or weed whacking is also effective. Because it often grows over desirable vegetation, herbicide application can be difficult. Foliar applications of glyphosate or triclopyr prior to flowering stage can prevent this annual plant from producing large amounts of seed. *Imazapic or other herbicides with residual soil activity can be helpful for heavy infestations and seed bank control; such efforts should always involve a licensed professional applicator since soil-active herbicides can cause unexpected damage to non-target plants. Therefore, caution and professional experience are required.*



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org | 5480389



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org | 5480287



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org | 5480455