

JAPANESE BARBERRY

invasive
fact sheet



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Japanese barberry invades Vermont's forests and fields. The plants are **easy to see in the fall** when their red berries are most colorful.


The Problem

- ◆ Japanese barberry can quickly colonize a forest. Birds and small mammals feast on the fruits and drop them, starting new populations. The plants also reproduce vegetatively. Individual stems reach toward the ground and 'layer,' developing new plants.
- ◆ It can grow so thickly in woodlands that few native shrub and tree seedlings or herbaceous plants survive.
- ◆ Barberry infestations can lead to increases in rates of Lyme disease. Ticks like to hang out on the tips of shrubs, waiting for mammals to pass by. Mice populations — an alternate host for Lyme disease — thrive in the thorny Barberry stands.
- ◆ Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) is sold in different ornamental varieties such as 'Aurea' with gold leaves or 'Crimson Pygmy' with purple leaves. Though these cultivars look different from the green-leaved Japanese barberry that is found in forests, studies show that these ornamental varieties are all capable of producing offspring with green leaves.




Japanese barberry


spatula-shaped leaves



red fruit



yellow flowers hanging below stem



single spine at each leaf base



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