

(revision date:4/5/2016)

Weeds: Bittersweet nightshade (European bittersweet)(Solanum dulcamara)

family: Solanaceae

cycle Perennial

plant type: Broadleaf

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful plant problem management.

Biology

Bittersweet nightshade is a trailing to climbing, viny plant with stems reaching up to ten feet. The dark green leaves are alternate on the slender stems, which are often woody at the base. Lower leaves are somewhat heart-shaped, while the upper leaves have distinct, separate lobes at the base. Stems and leaves may be somewhat purplish and have an unpleasant odor. Flowers are borne in loose clusters in the leaf axils. The star-shaped blossoms are purple with bright yellow anthers in the center. They resemble tomato and potato blossoms. The fruit is a small oval to round berry. The berries are green (unripe) to bright red (ripe) in color and contain yellowish seeds. This species does not persist in cultivated areas.

SPECIAL INFORMATION: All parts of the plant are toxic. The bright red berries are especially attractive to children and can be toxic if eaten in sufficient quantities.

Habitat

Bitter nightshade prefers rich, moist soils and is found in waste places, along fencerows, ditch banks, ornamental plantings, and other uncultivated sites. It is not usually a problem in maintained lawn and turfgrass.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Cultivation (rototilling or hoeing) will effectively eliminate plants.
- ~ Mowing to prevent seed production is a very effective means of management. In lawns, mowing regularly at the proper height for the grass species may help minimize weed growth and invasion.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

Apply according to label directions. Glyphosate products should be applied as spot treatments only!

NOTE: Some ingredients listed here are only available in combination. Read the label carefully on combination products to make sure the product is suitable for your specific situation.

Landscape Areas

- glyphosate

Turf Areas

Bare Ground Areas

- glyphosate

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Images



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade fruits*
~ Photo by: T.W. Miller



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade leaves and flowers*
~ Photo by: T.W. Miller



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade flowers*
~ Photo by: T.W. Miller



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade fruit*
~ Photo by: T.W. Miller



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade leaves and fruit*
~ Photo by: *D.G. Swan*



~ Caption: *Bittersweet nightshade leaves*
~ Photo by: *J.A. Kropf*