

Common barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*)

Also called: European barberry

Family: Barberry (Berberidaceae)

Native range: Europe

NJ Status: Emerging Stage 2- Uncommon (may be regionally abundant). It is *moderately* threatening to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

General description:

- Deciduous shrub, 3'-10' tall
- Spines along twigs, **often in groups of 3**
- Bark is yellow to gray
- Inner wood is yellow



3 pronged spines are characteristic of common barberry

Leaves:

- Clusters of 3-5
- 0.5"-2" long
- Finely toothed edges
- Small oval shape
- Dull green above, pale below
- Leaves out in early spring and turn bright red in fall



Flowers:

- Yellow drooping clusters 1"-2" long, 10-20 flowers in each cluster
- Hang from the underside of branches
- Blooms from May-June
- Unpleasant smell
- 0.25" across



Fruit:

- Oblong red to purple berry
- 0.25"-0.5" long
- Ripens in late summer or autumn



Habitat:

- Fields, successional forest, wetland, roadside

Commercial Availability: Yes

Look-alikes:

Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*)

- Widespread invasive shrub
- Untoothed leaf edges
- Smaller leaves- 0.5"-1.25"
- Single spine at each node
- Flowers hang in umbrella-shaped clusters
- Red fruit, similar to *B. vulgaris*

Japanese barberry has smooth leaf edges, singular spines, and non-clustered flowers.

