

Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

Family name: Bittersweet (Celastraceae)

Native range: China

NJ Status: Emerging Stage 1 - Rare (may be locally common). It is *moderately threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

General description:

- Evergreen vine, shrub or groundcover
- Climbs by aerial rootlets
- Popular landscaping plant with numerous cultivars



Cultivar with yellow foliage



Leaves:

- Opposite, oval-shaped
- Finely toothed leaf margins
- Dark green with lighter veins
- 1-3" long on sterile shoots or 2.5"-4" long on flowering branches



Flowers:

- Inconspicuous, greenish
- 4 petal-like parts
- Borne on horizontal, non-rootlet bearing branches that grow from climbing branches
- Blooms May-June



Fruit:

- Inconspicuous
- 4 parts
- Red to orange hanging fruits
- Matures in October and persists through winter

Habitat:

- Forests, floodplains, landscaping
- Full or partial shade

Commercial availability: Yes

Look-alikes:

The *Euonymus* species are best differentiated by growth habit and flower and fruit structure.

Hearts-a-bursting/strawberry-bush (*Euonymus americanus*)

- Native suckering shrub, 7'
- Moist forests, floodplains
- Green twigs, 4-angled
- 5 part flowers and fruits
- Seed casings bumpy



Running strawberry-bush (*Euonymus obovatus*)

- Shrub or groundcover to 1' tall
- 5 part flowers and fruits

Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*)

- Invasive shrub up to 15'
- Moist forests, landscaping
- 4 part flowers and fruits
- Branches winged or corky



European spindletree (*Euonymus europaea*)

- Invasive shrub up to 30'
- Moist forests and landscaping
- Lacks lighter veins
- 4 part flowers and fruits



Common periwinkle, creeping myrtle (*Vinca minor*)

- Invasive evergreen, groundcover
- Leaves opposite, untoothed
- Flowers blue, 5 petals, solitary, located at stem axils
- Moist forests and landscaping

