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Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas

Swearingen, J., K. Reshetiloff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 82 pp.

Periwinkle

Vinca minor

Common periwinkle is a vine or subshrub in the dogbane family (Apocynaceae) that is native to Europe and was introduced for ornamental purposes many decades ago. It occurs throughout the United States in at least 36 states, has escaped cultivation and is invading natural areas. Common periwinkle poses a threat to native plants and communities because it grows vigorously, forming a dense monotypic evergreen groundcover that displaces and excludes most other plants, including native wildflowers. It spreads by vegetative means only. Flower color can be blue, lilac or white. Several close relatives of this plant, including bigleaf periwinkle (*Vinca major*), imported from Europe, and Madagascar periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*), native only to Madagascar, are also invasive in natural areas in the mid-Atlantic and other regions of the United States and the world.



Jil Swearingen, NPS



Michael Clayton, UWI

Prevention and Control

Periwinkle can be removed by digging, raising the runners with a rake, and mowing the plants. All of the plant must be removed. It can also be controlled by cutting the plants in the spring followed by applying a glyphosate herbicide to the regrowth.

Native Alternatives

Vines:

crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

Groundcovers (use alone or mix for diversity and sustainability):

wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), evergreen wood fern (*Dryopteris marginalis* or *intermedia*), partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), creeping phlox (*Phlox stolonifera*), New York fern (*Thelypteris noveboracensis*), foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*)

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