

## MILE-A-MINUTE WEED

[*Polygonum perfoliatum* L.; *Ampelygonum perfoliatum* (L.) Roberty & Vautier;  
*Tracaulon perfoliatum* (L.) Greene<sup>9</sup>]  
POPE10



UGA1237070

**Habit:** Annual, shallow and fibrous-rooted, climbing vine<sup>4,15</sup> to 6-8 m (20-26 ft);<sup>10,15</sup> may behave as a perennial (with a tap root) in subtropical climates.<sup>12,15</sup>

**Reproduction:** By seed;<sup>12</sup> perennials may root at the nodes.<sup>15</sup>

**Leaves:** Alternate, simple, entire, glaucous, and glabrous; with recurved prickles on lower veins and petioles;<sup>5</sup> triangular in shape and bright to pale green in color (sometimes reddish when young); 3-8 cm (1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>-3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in) long and 5-9 cm (2-3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in) wide; peltate with the petiole;<sup>3,4</sup> sheathing stipule (ocrea) at petiole base encircles the stem (perfoliate).<sup>4,3,9,2,12</sup>

**Stems:** Wiry, slender, and armed with small, recurved prickles;<sup>2,8</sup> climbing or reclining on other plants;<sup>12</sup> becoming reddish with age.<sup>8,15</sup>

**Flowers:** Small (1.5 mm or <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in);<sup>15</sup> 10-15 in terminal or axillary spike-like racemes 1-2 cm (<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>-<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in) long; perfect, greenish-white to pink;<sup>4,12</sup> bloom early summer to fall.<sup>6,5</sup>

## MILE-A-MINUTE WEED



UGA0581048



UGA0002111

*Polygonum perfoliatum* L.

**Fruits/Seeds:** Round, shiny, black achene;<sup>12,15</sup> perianth 3-5 mm (1/8-1/4 in), persistent, thickening to a fleshy, berry-like, iridescent blue covering;<sup>4,12</sup> water, bird, small mammal, and human dispersed;<sup>12,15,6</sup> buoyant;<sup>2,12</sup> dispersed July-November;<sup>9,12</sup> germination mid-March to April;<sup>6</sup> cold stratification may be required in colder environments<sup>1,8</sup> but detrimental in warmer areas; scarification may promote germination;<sup>8</sup> persistent seed bank for at least 3 years.<sup>13</sup>

**Habitat:** Native to E. Asia;<sup>2,4,6</sup> introduced into the U.S. in 1890s<sup>10</sup> near Portland, OR, with no local spread;<sup>13</sup> found in Pennsylvania in the mid 1930s; along streams, in flood plains,<sup>12</sup> roadsides, disturbed sites (harvested forests), and open woodlands;<sup>7,11</sup> possible preference for moist soils.<sup>5</sup>

**Comments:** Easily spread in nursery stock;<sup>5</sup> relatively shade tolerant compared to native congeners;<sup>5</sup> performs better in open areas;<sup>9</sup> numerous native insects feed on it with little effect.<sup>9,14</sup>

**Similar Native Species:** *P. sagittatum* and *P. arifolium*; leaves not glaucous, peltate, or triangular and ocreae not perfoliate.<sup>5,11,12</sup>