

Amur peppervine **AMCO2**
Ampelopsis brevipedunculata (Maxim.) Trautv.
Synonym: porcelain-berry, porcelainberry

From: Miller, James H. and Steve T. Manning. [working title] An Expanded Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests: A Field Guide for Identification and Control. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. DRAFT - August 2008

Family: Vitaceae

Plant. Deciduous, woody vine of the grape family to 20 feet (5 m) long, running and climbing over shrub and tree crowns and rock faces by clinging tendrils, forming thicket and arbor infestations. Heart-shaped leaves with up to 6 deep lobes and toothed margins, axillary flat clusters of inconspicuous yellowish flowers in spring, and multi-colored spherical fruit of white, green, or blue in the fall and winter.

Stem. Woody vine to 4 inches (10 cm) diameter, climbing by tendrils with forked ends and fine hairs (native grapes tendrils not forked). Tendrils occur on new growth, opposite leaves. New stems are whitish green, smooth to lightly hairy, slightly square with regularly spaced swollen nodes, increasingly with raised dots (lenticels) that become corky and reddish, eventually forming linear gray-reddish bark patches. Bark glossy light gray becoming gray and rough with persistent swollen nodes. Pith is white, while native grape pith is brown.

Leaves. Alternate, simple and heart-shaped in outline but variable in form from entire with one to three tips to those with multiple incised rounded to scalloped lobes between three to five prominent whitish veins radiating from the base. Margins coarsely toothed with distinctive fine whitish hair tips. Dark green to blue-green, shiny above, fine hairy beneath, becoming yellow in fall. New leaves tiny at branch tips, progressively increasing up to 6 inches (15 cm) long and 4 inches (10 cm) wide. Petioles 2.5 inches (6 cm) long, light green and hairless, with greatly swollen bases.

Flowers. June to August. Numerous tiny-branched clusters (cymes) opposite new leaves with up to 40 flowers and fruit in mid-summer. Flowers tiny with five spreading white petals (grape petals touch at tips) and five yellow erect stamen (handlens may be required).

Fruit and seeds. July to January. Drupes in clusters, shiny, spherical, to 0.5 inch (1.2 cm) wide, green tipped with a persistent pistil and turning whitish, yellow, purple, turquoise, and porcelain blue (thus the common name), with all colors sometimes present. Each drupe contains two to four seeds. Persist in winter at most leaf axils.

Ecology. Occurs on a wide range of sites and grows rapidly to form exclusive infestations along forest edges. Found as scattered plants to extensive infestations in forest openings, margins, and roadsides as well as along stream margins and river banks. Areas from full sun to partial shade. Colonizes by prolific vine growth that roots at nodes and seeds spread by birds and other animals. **Resembles** grape vines (*Vitis* spp.) but can be distinguished by the whitish pith versus grape's darker pith, and forked tendrils versus grape's linear tendrils. **Also resembles** the native heartleaf peppervine (*Ampelopsis cordata*) with unlobed leaves and hairless stems.

History and use. Introduced from Northeast Asia in the 1800's as a landscape plant for the uniquely colored berries. Varieties are still sold in the plant trade.