

Chinese/European Privet

SHRUBS



T. Bodner



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Chinese privet shown in all images



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***Ligustrum sinense* Lour./*L. vulgare* L. LISI/LIVU**

Plant. Semievergreen to evergreen, thicket-forming shrubs to 30 feet (9 m) in height that are multiple stemmed and leaning-to-arching with long leafy branches. Essentially indistinguishable except at flowering. Chinese privet is the most widely occurring.

Stem. Opposite or whorled, long slender branching that increases upward with twigs projecting outward at near right angles. Brownish gray turning gray green and short hairy (rusty or grayish) with light dots (lenticels). Leaf scars semicircular with one bundle scar. Bark brownish gray to gray and slightly rough (not fissured).

Leaves. Opposite in two rows at near right angle to stem, thin, ovate to elliptic with rounded tip (often minutely indented), 0.8 to 1.6 inches (2 to 4 cm) long and 0.4 to 1.2 inches (1 to 3 cm) wide. Margins entire. Lustrous green above and pale green with hairy midvein beneath (European privet not hairy beneath). Petioles 0.04 to 0.2 inch (1 to 5 mm) long, rusty hairy. Leaves usually persistent during winter.

Flowers. April to June. Abundant, terminal and upper axillary clusters on short branches forming panicles of white flowers. Corolla four-lobed, tube 0.06 to 0.1 inch (1.5 to 2 mm) long and equal or shorter than the lobes, with stamens extending from the corolla on Chinese privet and within the corolla on European privet. Fragrant.

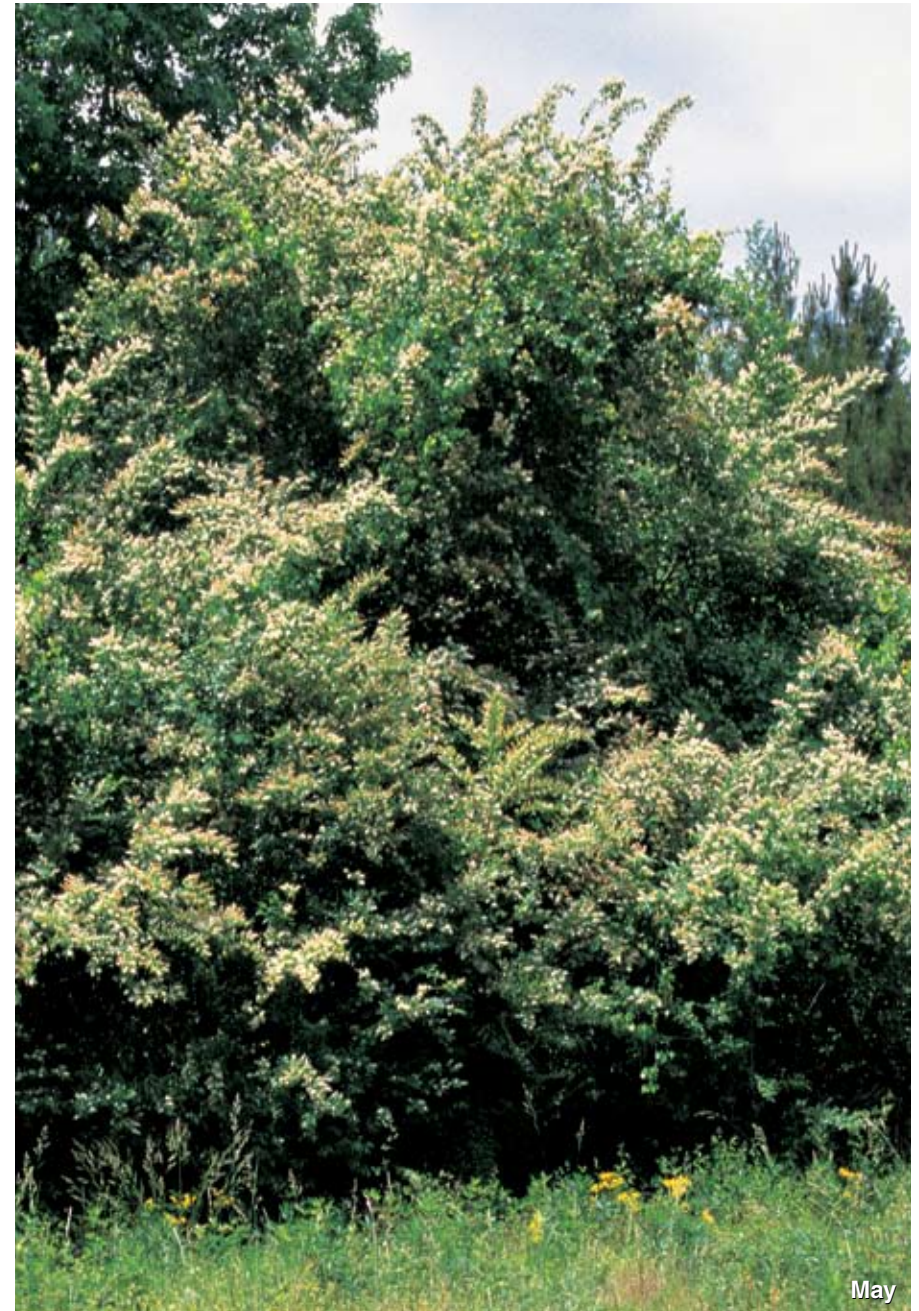
Fruit and seeds. July to March. Dense ovoid drupes hanging or projecting outward, 0.2 to 0.3 inch (6 to 8 mm) long and 0.16 inch (4 mm) wide, containing one to four seeds. Pale green in summer ripening to dark purple and appearing almost black in late fall to winter.

Ecology. Aggressive and troublesome invasives, often forming dense thickets, particularly in bottom-land forests and along fencerows, thus gaining access to forests, fields, and right-of-ways. Shade tolerant. Colonize by root sprouts and spread widely by abundant bird- and other animal-dispersed seeds.

Resemble Japanese privet, *L. japonicum* Thunb., which has larger leaves and is further described in this book. **Also resemble** upland swampprivet, *Forestiera ligustrina* (Michx.) Poir., which occurs mainly on rocky sites and has short twigs and sparse flowers and fruit.

History and use. Introduced from China and Europe in the early to mid-1800s. Traditional southern ornamentals. Deer browse Chinese privet sprouts.

States with suspected infestations are shown in gray.

**Chinese/European Privet****2103**

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May