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## Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

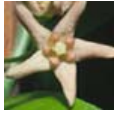
### Catalog of Species Search Results

### *Polygonum perfoliatum*

(Mile-a-Minute Vine

Mile-a-Minute Knotweed

Asiatic tearthumb )



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

### COMMON NAME

Mile-a-Minute Vine

Mile-a-Minute Knotweed

Asiatic tearthumb

### FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Polygonum perfoliatum* L.

### FAMILY NAME COMMON

Knotweed family

### FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Polygonaceae

### IMAGES



Habit



Leaves



Armed Stems



Inflorescence  
Close-up



Incursion



Fruit Close-up



Close-up of Fruits  
and Ocreate



Seedlings

## NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

**Synonyms:** None

## DESCRIPTION

### Botanical Glossary

*Polygonum perfoliatum* is a rapidly growing herbaceous annual vine. Stems can grow up to 7 m (23 ft.) in length and as much as 15 cm per day. Its dense foliage can quickly cover surrounding vegetation. A characteristic cup-shaped ocrea (or bract) surrounds the stem at the base of the petiole; those of the upper leaves are conspicuously expanded. The petioles and veins on the underside of the foliage are armed with retrorse barbs. The petioles are long and perfoliate. The thin, jointed, branched stems are green to reddish-green in color. The alternate leaves are pale green, thin and glabrous. They are 2-8 cm (0.75-3.0 in.) wide, deltoid in shape, being as long as they are wide (this leaf shape gives rise to its common names, devil's tail).

The flowers are borne on racemes 1-2 cm (0.4-0.8 in.) in length that emerge from the ocrea. These inconspicuous white flowers measure 3-5 mm (0.12-0.2 in.), bear three stigmas and often remain closed. Green, berry-like fruits, 5 mm (0.2 in.) in diameter, are produced in June and become metallic blue color as they ripen. Each fruit contains a shiny, black, reddish-black, nearly round achene 2 mm (0.08 in.) in diameter. *Polygonum perfoliatum* produces fruit continuously until the first frost, when the plants begin to die back. Dead plants in winter are reddish-brown to tan in color and often forming brittle mats.

Page References Fernald 588, Gleason & Cronquist 138, Holmgren 12. See the reference section below for full citations.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

*Polygonum arifolium* L. (halberdleaf tearthumb) [Picture of \*P. arifolium\*](#)  
*Polygonum sagittatum* L. (arrowleaf tearthumb) [Picture of \*P. sagittatum\*](#)  
*Polygonum scandens* var. *cristatum* (Engelm. & Gray) Gleason

buckwheat) [Picture of \*P. scandens\*](#)

*Calystegia sepium* (L.) R. Br. (wild morning glory) [Picture of \*C. sepium\*](#)

Other species not listed in table:

*Polygonum cilinode* Michx. (fringed black bindweed) [Picture of \*P. cilinode\*](#)

*Polygonum convolvulus* L. (black bindweed) [Picture of \*P. convolvulus\*](#)

Character	<i>Polygonum perfoliatum</i>	<i>Polygonum arifolium</i>	<i>Polygonum sagittatum</i>	<i>Polygonum scandens</i> var. <i>cristatum</i>	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>
Petiole attachment	Perfoliate (margins entirely surrounding stem)	Petiole attached to margin	Petiole attached to margin	Petiole attached to margin	Petiole attached to margin
Barbs	Present	Present	Present	Absent	Absent
Fruit	Berry-like	Lenticular (winged) achene	Lenticular (winged) achene	Lenticular (winged) achene	Capsule

## REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

The fruits of *Polygonum perfoliatum* are most often dispersed by birds and small mammals.

## DISTRIBUTION

*Polygonum perfoliatum* is native to east Asia. It has invaded Columbia, Canada, and was introduced to Oregon with ship ballast in 1946. *Polygonum perfoliatum* has also been found in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, Washington D.C., Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Mississippi. In New England it was recently found in Connecticut and Rhode Island (2001).

## HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

In 1946, *Polygonum perfoliatum* was discovered in Pennsylvania in a shipment of rhododendrons, and has since spread to nearby states. It was first found in Connecticut in 2000, and although its means of introduction is unclear, it apparently had been extant for a few years before being reported. Within a year it was reported from Rhode Island, where it was found growing in a rhododendron/azalea nursery.

## HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Abandoned Field  
Early Successional Forest  
Edge  
Pasture  
Railroad Right-of-Way

Roadside  
Utility Right-of-Way  
Vacant Lot  
Wet Meadow  
Yard or Garden

Currently known from a small number of sites in Connecticut and Island, *Polygonum perfoliatum* is usually found in open disturbed are abandoned agricultural fields. In Fairfield County, Connecticut it is grov a planted butterfly garden while in Washington County, Rhode Island a nursery. Interestingly, at the Connecticut site it is spreading in adjacent early successional forest and has been observed climbir trunks of trees up to 4 m (13 ft.) high. In other states it has been de: along roadsides, stream edges and wet meadows.

## THREATS

*Polygonum perfoliatum* has the potential to overgrow and outcompete vegetation. Trees and other plants could suffer mechanical damage the weight of this vine. The fact that it is being transported aro nursery stock is also a problem, because it may be planted inadve with other plants.

## EARLY WARNING NOTES

*Polygonum perfoliatum* has only recently been reported from Conn and Rhode Island. Any additional sites should be reported.

## MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)

[Mile-a-minute Weed in the Northeast](#)

An Excerpt from a talk by Larry McCormick

[Plant Conservation Alliance](#)

Fact sheet with managment information

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

[Documentation required:](#) Herbarium specimen or mounted snippet stems with the leaves.

[Best time for documentation:](#) Summer, fall.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Taxonomic information

[The PLANTS database](#)

General information and a map

[invasives.org](http://invasives.org)

Comprehensive information

[Ohio State University Extension](#)

Images and short description

[Plant Conservation Alliance](#)

Fact sheet

[Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)

General information including control

[Mile-a-minute Weed in the Northeast](#)

An excerpt from a talk by Larry McCormick

## REFERENCES

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## DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- ☒ Formatted display as table
- ☐ Export as comma-delimited text file

Submit Selection

## MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- ☒ The whole New England area
- ☐ One or more states
- ☐ One or more counties
- ☐ One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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