



December 2022

Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

from State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management
(SICIM)

Wintercreeper is an evergreen vine introduced from China and East Asia in the early 1900s as an ornamental evergreen groundcover for landscaping. This aggressive species readily invades a wide variety of forested areas throughout the United States and Canada. Wintercreeper is among the 44 species regulated under the Indiana DNR Terrestrial Plant Rule, effective in April 2020. This rule limits the sale, exchange, transport, or introduction of this invasive plant including cultivars such as 'Emerald 'n' Gold'.

IDENTIFICATION: Wintercreeper is a vining evergreen groundcover that readily climbs trees and structures. It can be identified by its waxy dark green oval leaves with distinctive

silver veins and toothed edges. The leaves are oppositely arranged and become larger and more rounded in form on climbing reproductive vines. Younger stems are dark green, growing thicker and woody as they age. On climbing vines, clusters of small, green flowers in mid-summer give rise to fruits in fall with pinkish capsules that split to reveal seeds with red-orange arils. Climbing vines of Purple Wintercreeper are most easily spotted now and throughout the dormant season.

Purple Wintercreeper may be confused with Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), which is also an invasive evergreen groundcover. To differentiate, Periwinkle leaves have smooth edges and more slender stems. Additionally, Periwinkle is not a true vine in that it spreads vegetatively along the ground via runners and does not climb.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: The vines of Wintercreeper spread forming dense mats along the ground that suppress native understory plants and tree regeneration. As it vines up trees, the dense foliage blocks sunlight and heavy vines can weigh down canopies, making them susceptible to storm damage. Areas carpeted with Wintercreeper are unable to support native plants upon which our native wildlife depends. Unfortunately, the fruits of this woodland invader are readily eaten and spread by birds and other wildlife, giving rise to countless new populations.



HABITAT & DISTRIBUTION: Able to grow well in a variety of soil types ranging from partial to full shade, this evergreen plant pest easily spreads beyond landscape plantings into neighboring yards, parks and natural areas. The creeping vines are fast growing and new vines abundantly arise from dispersed seed. Found ubiquitously in its home range of East Asia (including China, Korea, the Philippines and Japan), in North America, Wintercreeper has escaped cultivation throughout the Mid-Atlantic, Midwest and Great Lakes, and South-Central regions.

CONTROL: An effective way to limit the spread of Wintercreeper into natural areas is through containment and removal from any landscape plantings. Since Wintercreeper is

spread very easily by seed, the first priority should be cut stem treatment with glyphosate or triclopyr of climbing vines to prevent flowering and setting fruit.

Repeated manual removal of Wintercreeper vines along the ground is a safe and generally effective (though labor intensive) method of control. It is necessary to pull as many ground vines and roots as possible and any pulled material should be removed from site to avoid regrowth. Any pulled plant parts should be either burned or left in bags to solarize to desiccate then discarded as solid waste.

For larger areas of coverage, pulling Wintercreeper can result in soil disturbance, leading to surface erosion and colonization by other invasives. To reduce this impact, chemical foliar application of glyphosate or triclopyr (with adequate surfactant) is an effective measure for control. Mowing or trimming then allowing to resprout in advance of foliar treatment can increase effectiveness of chemical control. Focusing chemical control efforts during winter months will help limit harm to native vegetation. If applying herbicide in winter, timing treatments for warmer sunny days will provide greater success. Always read and follow pesticide label directions. Herbicides should only be mixed and applied according to their label and using the protective equipment specified.

For smaller patches there has been some success with smothering by mulching with layers of cardboard alone or in combination with wood chips at a depth of at least 6 and up to 12 inches. The mulch must remain in place for at least 2 growing seasons to suppress and kill Wintercreeper infestations. Mowing or string trimming in advance of smothering can increase effectiveness.

For long term success, follow up monitoring and repeated control are an essential part of any management plan.

INDIANA NATIVE ALTERNATIVES: Christmas Fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), Common Wood Sedge (*Carex blanda*), Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Mayapple (*Podophyllum peltatum*), Native Violets (*Viola* spp), Running Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus obovatus*), Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*), Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), Woolly Dutchmans Pipevine (*Aristolochia tomentosa*)

Fact Sheet

Nature Lovers Gift Guide

Looking for something special for the nature lover in your life? Check out this list of great gifts!



Prophetstown State Park

Our local state park has some great gifts including the latest wildflower guide for Indiana, books on oaks, jewelry, and the 2023 Indiana State Park pass!

[Learn More](#)



NICHES Land Trust

Support our local land trust! You can give a gift membership for \$25.

[Learn More](#)



Indiana Native Plant Society

“Ask Me About Native Plants” shirts support the work of INPS!

[Learn More](#)



SICIM

“Ask Me About Invasive Plants” shirts support the work of SICIM!

[Learn More](#)

Monarch Gardens

Author and urban prairie designer, Benjamin Vogt’s website has MANY different shirts to choose from with fun sayings like “Lawn rhymes with yawn” and “I stand in Solidago with wildlife gardeners.”

[Learn More](#)



Need some help removing invasive plants? Check out the puller bears or digging knives in WREC's tool library! You can reserve tools for two weeks. Check their website for the reservation calendar and more information!

WREC Tool Library

2022: A Year in Review

Here's a snapshot of the work TICT has been involved with in 2022!



FEB - Invasive Plant Management Workshop



Continuing Education for Professionals



APR - Honeysuckle removal at Amphitheater



MAY - Native Plant Fest



at Ross Camp



TICT booth at community events



**JUL - Honeysuckle
removal with Wabash**



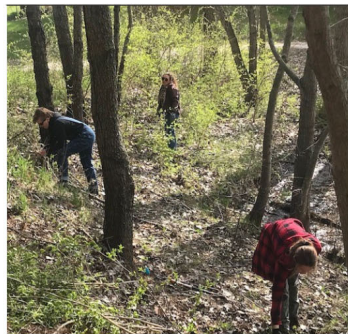
**on WREC's property near
Shamrock Dog Park**



OCT - TICT Cookout



**NOV - Honeysuckle
removal workday**



**at James Cole Elementary
Outdoor Ed. Center**



Volunteer Call-Out

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Want to make an impact on your community?

Looking for service opportunities for your office, club, church, etc?

Enjoy being outdoors and meeting new people?

Contact us to learn about upcoming opportunities.

TICTaboutinvasives@gmail.com

www.TippecanoeCountySWCD.org/TICT-2
[www.Facebook.com/TippecanoeInvasiveCooperative Taskforce](https://www.Facebook.com/TippecanoeInvasiveCooperativeTaskforce)

We are looking for businesses, organizations, clubs, and other groups to volunteer for invasive removal projects in our community! No experience necessary—all tools provided! It's a great opportunity for team-building and making a difference in the community. Contact TICT at TICTaboutinvasives@gmail.com to learn more.

Workday Watch




Watch your email or our Facebook page for pop-up workdays as weather allows this winter!



Copyright 2022 Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:
[1812 Troxel Dr. # C3, Lafayette, IN 47909](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

Grow your business with  **mailchimp**