

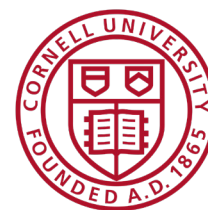
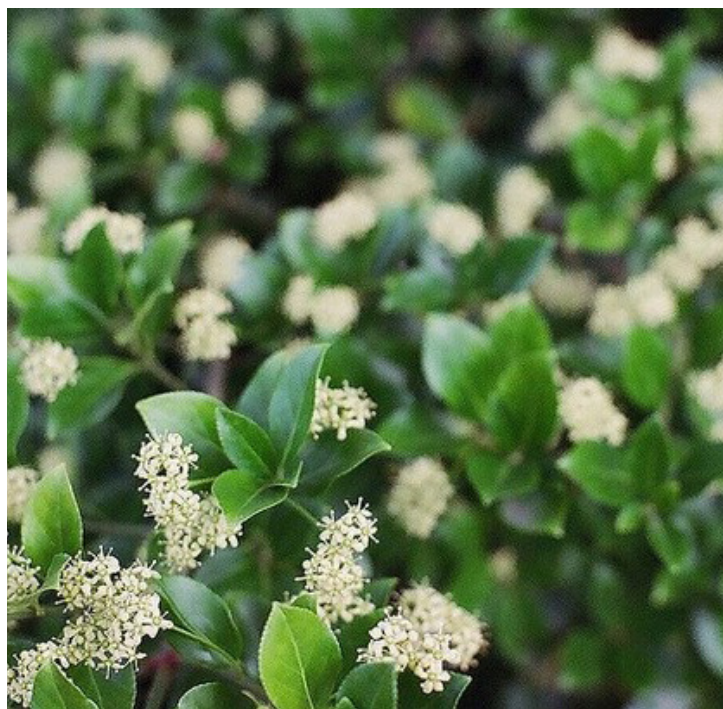
Beautiful Berries - Not

by Carol Ann Harlos

Recently I saw a letter and photograph of a woody vine in the March 2021 New York State Conservationist magazine. The plant was described as a “woody vine with white seed pods containing bright red seeds. Quite a pretty sight climbing an old willow along the Lake Ontario Parkway Trail...” Steve Young, Chief Botanist, NY Natural Heritage Program identified it as *Euonymus fortunei*, winter creeper, an invasive plant found in the Lower Hudson region and several places around Rochester and Buffalo. He wrote “It should be removed.”

E. fortunei was introduced about a hundred years ago. It causes issues in woodlands because it smothers young trees and wildflowers.

Winter creeper belongs to the Celastraceae family and is a native of East Asia. It is an evergreen shrub that grows vine-like if there is a means of support. It has small rootlets much like ivy which aids in its climbing. Although it is not related to ivy it also has a creeping phase that enables it to grow up to 70 feet! Only then does it develop into the adult flowering phase of its life cycle. The flowers are not notable. The fruit is a dehiscent capsule (bursts open) with red arils (an extra seed covering). The seeds are eaten by birds and are spread in their droppings.



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