WISCONSIN WILDCARDS

ALIEN INVADERS

Mile-a-Minute Vine

Polygonum perfoliatum

Basic ID

This fast-growing, climbing, annual vine has alternate triangular shaped leaves that grow on trailing reddish stems. It reaches up to 25' long with small, downward pointing barbs on the underside of leaves and stems. It blooms in late spring with white flowers. Short terminal clusters of round fruits are a very distinctive metallic-blue, resting on a leaf-like disk, clasped by the stem.

Facts

Native to Asia, it climbs over native vegetation to form a thick canopy of leaves that reduces sunlight to plants below. It invades damp, open woodlands, wet meadows, stream banks and roadsides. Seeds are spread by birds, ants, small mammals and water. The seeds float, spreading infestations throughout a watershed. The barbs on the vine easily rip skin and clothes.

Management

- Hand-pull whole plants (with roots) before seed development.
- Apply herbicide to seedlings in the spring.
- Monitor for resprouting.

FR-516 2013

CAUTION:
WEAR HEAVY GLOVES AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING.

Photo: Leslie J. Merhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
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WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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