



Common Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* L.

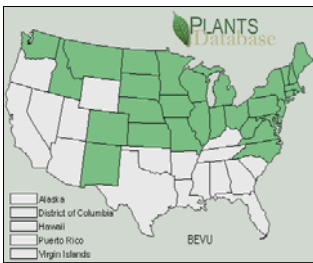
Common Names: common barberry, European barberry, jaundice-berry, pepperidge, pepperidge bush, pipperidge bush, sowberry

Native Origin: Europe - Britain

Description: An armed deciduous shrub in the barberry family (*Berberidaceae*) growing 8 to 10 feet in height and 6 feet in width. The bark is gray having sharp spines at nodes and the inner wood is yellow. Spines are double- or triple- branched. The arched hanging branches have clusters of leaves that are small, toothed, ovate, alternate, dull green above and grayish below. Leaves on young sprouts are spiny. Yellow flowers are perfect, 1/2 inch long, occur in drooping racemes 1 to 2 inches long and have an unpleasant odor. Flowers give way to small oblong berries that are scarlet red to purple. They contain 1-3 small, black seeds. Common barberry spread by seed and by vegetative expansion.



Note: Common barberry differs from Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii* DC.) by its sharply toothed leaf margins and 3-pronged spines under each leaf cluster. It also has taller, more loosely arranged branches than Japanese Barberry.



Habitat: It is found in shaded and open woods, pastures, thickets, hedges, fencerows, roadsides, and clearings. It prefers full sun to part shade and loamy to clay soils.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CA, CT, IL, IN, IA, PA, MA, ME, MT, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, RI, TN, VT, and WI.

Ecological Impacts: Barberry produces a large number of seeds which have a high germination rate. Seeds are transported to new locations with the help of birds and small mammals that eat it. It can form spiny dense stands that shade out and limit the growth of native plants. It can reduce wildlife habitat and forage. Common barberry is also an alternate host for wheat rust which prevents the sale of seeds and plants in some states.

Control and Management:

- **Manual-** In early spring, use a hoe, weed wrench, or mattock to uproot the entire bush and associated roots; remove entire root system to prevent resprouts; use gloves to help protect hands from the spines, once large shrubs have been removed from fields, regular mowing helps prevent reestablishment.
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Follow label and state requirements.

Natural enemy- black stem grain rust (*Puccinia graminis*).

References: <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/list/a.htm, <http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/moredocs/berthu01.pdf>, www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/japanese_euro_barberry.htm, http://invasives.eeb.uconn.edu/ipane/ctcouncil/CT_Invasive_Plant_List.htm, www.colby-sawyer.edu/academic/ces/herbarium/invasive/invasive4.html, www.riwps.org/PlantLibrary/invasives/descriptions/japanese_barberry.htm www.arborea.se/1214bo.jpg, <http://scienceviews.com/plants/barberry.html>, www.pfaf.org/database/plants.php?Berberis+vulgaris, www.purplesage.org.uk/profiles/barberry.htm