



COMMON PERIWINKLE

Vinca minor L

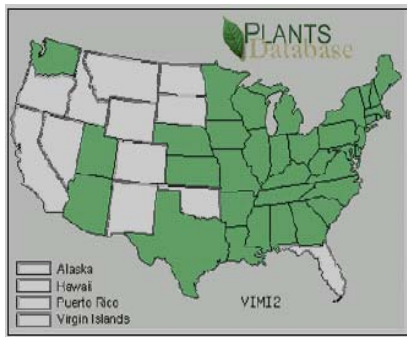
Common Names: Common periwinkle, myrtle, ground myrtle

Native Origin: Europe; introduced for ornamental purposes

Description: Creeping evergreen vine in the dogbane family (Apocynaceae) growing 3" to 6" tall. It forms a dense tangled mat of long stems and elliptical leaves, rooting at intervals. Shiny dark green leaves are opposite, narrow elliptic, 0.8 to 1.8 inches long and 0.4 to 1 inch wide. Stems are slender, trailing, twining, herbaceous, typically hollow and green. Spring flowers are axillary, usually solitary, and pale blue, lilac or white. Slender, cylindrical fruit to 2 inches long becomes dry and splitting to release three to five seeds. It spreads vegetatively.



Habitat: It grows in partial shade, tends to yellow in full sun and high heat, best soil is moist, well-drained and fertile; relatively soil adaptable; grows in woods, bluffs, and waste ground. Found around home site plantings, grave yards, and scattered in open dense canopied forests.



Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in CA, CT, DC, DE, GA, IA, IL, IN, KY, MD, MI, NC, NJ, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI, and WV.

Ecological Impacts: This aggressive grower poses a threat to native plants and communities. Its vigorous growth forms mats of monotypic evergreen groundcover that displaces and excludes most other plants, including native wildflowers. Extensive infestations can be found under forest canopies.

Control and Management:

- **Manual-** Digging, raising the runners with a rake to remove all plant parts; mowing
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate in the spring. Repeat application to prevent re-growth. Follow label and state requirements.
- **Natural Pest:** Stem blight, caused by *Phoma exigua* var. *exigua* is a serious disease of *Vinca minor*. The fungus causes a dieback that begins soon after new growth appears in the spring.



References: www.invasive.org/eastern/srs/EV.html, <http://plants.usda.gov>, <http://www.canr.uconn.edu>, Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, National Park Service, p. 74, www.forestimages.org, www.missouriplants.com/Blueopp/Vinca_minor_page.html, www.uoguelph.ca/pdc/Factsheets/Diseases/VincaStemBlight.htm, www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/periwinkle_M_C.htm, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/vimi1.htm