



## Weed of the Month for December 2016

### Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

**Origin:** Asia

**Interesting Fact:** Wintercreeper is probably the number one most invasive plant in Vincennes, if not the entire county. One resident noticed it becoming a problem in her landscaping around 40 years ago. We have been working to raise awareness of this invasive plant throughout the county.

**Description:** Wintercreeper is a perennial woody vine that forms groundcover and can climb up trees as high as 70 ft. Wintercreeper has small to medium, finely-toothed, opposite leaves that are evergreen.

**Defining characteristics:**

- Small to medium, opposite leaves that are mostly oval in shape with finely-toothed edges
- Leaves are evergreen and can be variegated
- Small green/white flowers in the summer
- Clusters of red fruits that develop in fall



(Left image) The cluster of red berries

(Center image) Wintercreeper growing along the ground

(Right image) Wintercreeper climbing up a tree



**Habitat:** Found in disturbed areas, woods, and ditches. Can outcompete turf in partly shaded to very shaded conditions.

Wintercreeper dominating the forest understory at Camp Wildwood in Vincennes.



**Ecological threat:** Wintercreeper can form dense groundcover in interior woods, outcompeting native plants and trees. Birds disperse seeds, leading to wide proliferation. Climbing vines can inhibit large trees as well as smother small trees and shrubs.

**Control Methods:**

- Manual: Most manual methods are not effective, except for very small patches that can be pulled.
- Chemical: Cut stump treating large vines is very effective. Foliar herbicide applications have had varying degrees of success. We are running a trial right now to determine the most effective treatment strategy. Keep in touch for more details.

**References**

Kaufman, Sylvan R. and Wallace Kaufman. 2012. *Invasive Plants*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. Print.