



Weed of the Month for April 2017

Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)

Origin: Europe

Interesting Fact: Periwinkle was first introduced as an ornamental and is still often used in the landscaping industry as a groundcover.

Description: Periwinkle is a perennial woody vine that forms a dense groundcover. Periwinkle has small, entire, opposite leaves that are evergreen.

Defining characteristics:

- Small, opposite leaves that are mostly oval in shape
- Leaves are evergreen and can be variegated
- Blue-purple flowers with 5 connected petals that flower in the spring



(Left image) The flowers of Periwinkle

(Center image) Periwinkle covering a section of a local woodland

(Right image) Periwinkle ready to be sold at a local nursery

Knox County Cooperative Weed Management Area



Habitat: Found in woods, ditches, and on hillsides. Can outcompete turf in partly shaded to very shaded conditions.

Periwinkle dominating the forest understory of a woodlot in Knox County.



Ecological threat: Periwinkle can form dense groundcover in interior woods, outcompeting native plants and trees. Also, it provides little to no wildlife value because the seeds are too small and leaves are toxic to herbivores.

Control Methods:

- Manual: Most manual methods are not effective, except for very small patches that can be pulled.
- Chemical: Foliar herbicide applications are the best strategy for large patches. Use a herbicide like Glyphosate; 2,4-D or Triclopyr plus a surfactant (sticking agent). Best time to treat is from late fall to early spring to avoid collateral damage.

References

- Kaufman, Sylvan R. and Wallace Kaufman. 2012. *Invasive Plants*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. Print.
- Swearingen, J., B. Slattery, K. Reshetiloff, and S. Zwicker. 2010. *Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas*, 4th ed. National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Washington, DC. PDF.