



Weed of the Month for March 2017

Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)

Origin: China and Korea

Interesting Fact: Callery Pear has very showy blooms, but many people describe their smell as being foul. Also, Callery Pear was first introduced as a root stock for fruiting pear species and was accidentally left to grow once, which led to its widespread landscaping use.

Description: Callery Pear is a small tree that can grow up to 30-40 ft. tall. It has alternate, simple leaves that are sometimes wavy, and the escaped trees can have thorns.

Defining characteristics:

- Lots of conspicuous 5-petaled white flowers that appear before other tree species.
- Bark has lots of shallow fissures that develop into small blocky bark.
- Deep “V” branching pattern, especially in landscaped individuals
- Escaped individuals can develop thorns.



(Left image) The many blooms of a mature Callery Pear in Spring.

(Center image) The bark of a medium tree. Note the “V” branching pattern.

(Top Right image) An example of the thorns that can develop.

(Bottom Right image) A young Callery Pear twig.

Knox County Cooperative Weed Management Area



Habitat: Found in disturbed areas, roadsides, and woods. Often found near landscaped individuals.

Callery Pear trees stand out this time of year because of their white blooms that happen before any other trees.



Ecological threat: All Callery Pear cultivars (cultivated varieties) are engineered to be sterile. Common examples include 'Bradford' Pear and 'Cleveland Select' Pear. However, different cultivars can cross-pollinate and produce viable seed. This seed is unfortunately consumed by many species of birds and spread far and wide.

Control Methods:

- **Manual:** Small individuals can be pulled, and small to medium sized trees can be removed with a leverage device, such as a Pullerbear. A large patch can be initially cleared by manual methods, but resprouts will need to be addressed.
- **Chemical:** Foliar herbicide applications of glyphosate or triclopyr are fine for seedlings or small trees. A basal bark herbicide application with triclopyr can be used for most larger trees. Cut stump treatments or frilling with glyphosate or triclopyr are also very effective.

Callery Pear landscaped in Vincennes.



References

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

Weeks, Sally S.; Weeks, Harmon P., and George R. Parker. 2010. *Native Trees of the Midwest*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. Print.