



Invasive Species of the Month for March 2018

Border Privet (*Ligustrum obtusifolium*)

Origin: Japan

Interesting Fact: Privet species are fairly difficult to identify from one another, but all of them are exotic and invasive to varying degrees. Other species potentially found in Indiana include California Privet (*L. ovalifolium*), Chinese Privet (*L. sinense*), and European Privet (*L. vulgare*).

Description: Border Privet is a woody shrub in the Olive Family that grow up to 15 ft. tall. Border Privet has small opposite leaves with rounded edges, white flowers in early summer, and clusters of blue-black fruits in the fall.

Defining characteristics:

- Oval, opposite leaves with rounded edges
- Terminal clusters of small, white flowers with 4 petals
- High density of stems growing together
- Terminal clusters of green fruits that turn blue-black as they mature
- Slightly hairy stems that can have spurs



Images from left to right: Foliage in the summer, fruits in the winter, and a dense cluster of stems.



Knox County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

Habitat: Woodlands, riparian areas, floodplains, roadsides, ditches, old fields, and fencerows

Clump of Border Privet beginning to leaf out in February in Knox County.



Ecological threat: Border Privet can form thick, dense stands that outcompete native vegetation. It is spread primarily by the fruit, which is consumed by wildlife and deposited elsewhere. In addition, its foliage may have a chemical defense against herbivory by insects and mammals.

Control Methods:

- **Manual:** For small individuals, hand pulling is effective. A weed wrench can also be used to pull out larger individuals. Be sure to remove all of the roots because resprouts can occur from root fragments.
- **Chemical:** There are several effective methods of chemical control for Privets. Cut stump treating* large shrubs is very effective with an herbicide like glyphosate. Basal bark application* with triclopyr can also be effective. Large, short stature patches can also be controlled with a foliar application* of an herbicide like glyphosate, triclopyr, or 2,4-D.

*Always follow herbicide label instructions.

References

- IPSAWG. "Invasive Plant Species Factsheet: Blunt-leaved Privet."
http://www.in.gov/dnr/files/Blunt_Leaved_Privet.pdf. 2006. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018.
- Maddox, Victor et al. "Identification and control of Invasive Privets (*Ligustrum* spp.) in the Middle Southern United States." *Invasive Plant Science and Management*, no. 3, 2010, pp. 482-488.
- Pennsylvania DCNR. "Invasive Plants of Pennsylvania: Privets." *Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources*.
http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_010226.pdf. Accessed 8 Mar. 2018.
- 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. 168pp.