



## Invasive Species of the Month for December 2019

### Jetbead (*Rhodotypos scandens*)

**Origin:** East Asia

**Introduction:** First brought to the US around 1866 as an ornamental shrub

#### Botanical Terminology:

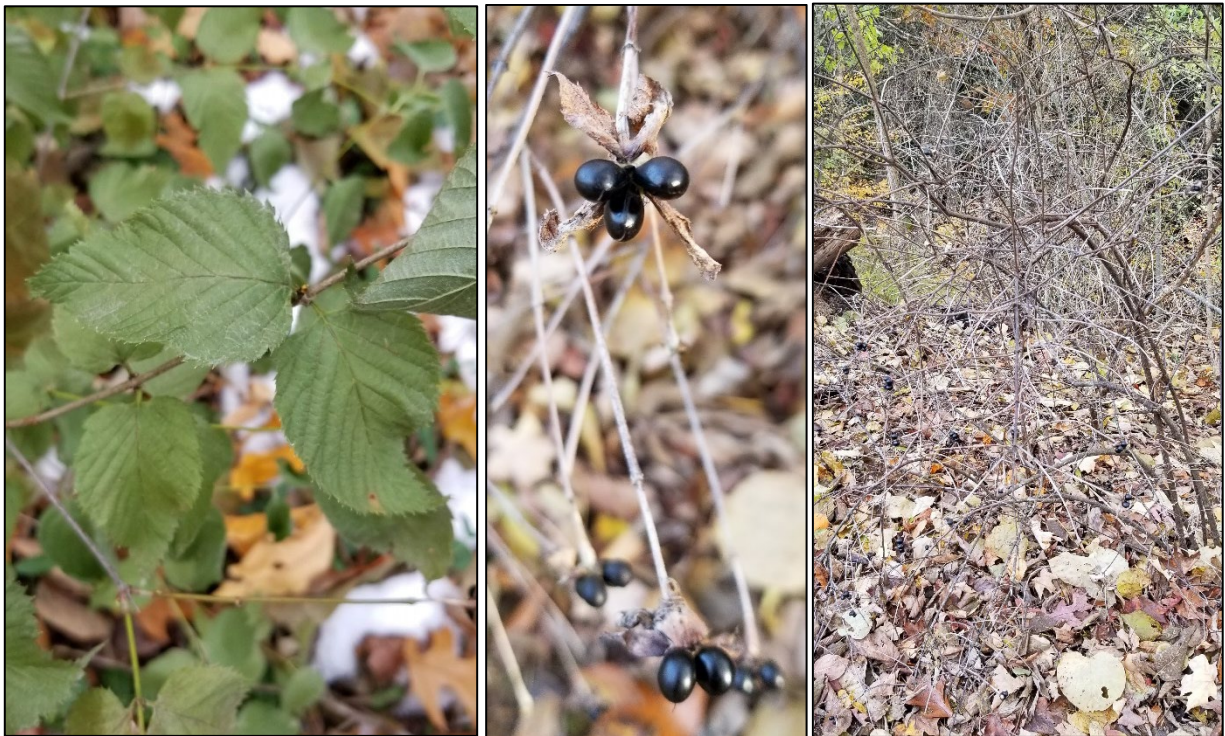
*Pinnate* – a type of arrangement with features on either side of an axis, often in opposite pairs

**Interesting Fact:** Jetbead's fruits look inviting but are actually highly poisonous and may be fatal if ingested. The compound Amygdalin in the fruit can break down into hydrogen cyanide during the human digestion process. However, the fruits are consumed by birds.

**Description:** Jetbead is a small shrub species in the Rose Family that can grow to 6 ft. tall but is generally shorter. It has opposite, toothed leaves and white, four-petaled flowers that turn into black, berry-like fruit when ripe.

#### Defining characteristics:

- Opposite, toothed leaves with prominent pinnately netted venation
- Conspicuous, white four-petaled flowers
- Terminal clusters of four, shiny black, berry-like fruit that persist throughout the winter
- Branches have arching habit with reddish-brown bark



Left Images: Jetbead's opposite, toothed leaves

Center Image: The shiny, black fruit of Jetbead in the winter

Right Images: Jetbead's bark and arching habitat after its leaves have dropped.



**Habitat:** Forests, forest edges, right-of-ways, and other disturbed areas



Above Image: Jetbead in bloom with last year's fruits still present (Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org).

**Ecological threat:** Jetbead can invade forest understories and form dense patches that inhibit other native plant species. Jetbead has been shown to be a heavy seed producer, and it is primarily spread by birds which feed on the fruit and spread them far and wide. Jetbead is also a very adaptable species and can tolerate sunny to shady sites, dry to wet sites, and urban plantings.

**Control Methods:**

- Manual: Pulling or digging of young individuals can be effective. Mowing or cutting large individuals can reduce biomass, but Jetbead resprouts readily from root system.
- Chemical: Probably the most effective method on large, dense patches. Foliar applications of herbicides with a glyphosate\* solution are effective for young individuals. Larger shrubs can be cut stump treated with a cut stem concentration of glyphosate\* or triclopyr\*.

\*Always follow herbicide label instructions.

**References**

Ebinger, J.E. and W. McClain. 1998. "Notes on Some Woody Plant Species Naturalized in Illinois." *Erigenia* 16: 67-70.

Kaufman, Sylvan R. and Wallace Kaufman. 2012. *Invasive Plants*. Stackpole Books.

Michigan Natural Features Inventory. 2017. "Black jetbead (*Rhodotypos scandens*)." Midwest Invasive Species Network. <http://www.misin.msu.edu/facts/detail/?id=7> (Accessed 12-12-19).