

Common Invasive Plants

Easy ID Cards



By: Cody Werner & Kerry Wixted
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A



B



C

Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*
Mustard family (Brassicaceae)

H

Size: Herbaceous, biennial plant (needs two growing seasons to complete its growth cycle) First year plants are groups of leaves (basal rosette) (C) which grow in the second year when they produce a 1-4 foot tall flowering stalk.(A)

Leaves: First year rosettes are green, heart shaped, 1-6 inch leaves. Leaves become more triangular and strongly toothed as the plant matures. (B)

Flower: Each flower has 4 small, white petals in the early spring. (C)

Fruit: Seeds are shiny black and are produced in slender green pods which turn pale brown late summer.

Habitat: Occurs in forest habitats, floodplains, and disturbed lands. Not tolerant of highly acidic soils.

Other: Easily recognized by a garlic odor when any part of the plant is crushed. Chemicals in garlic mustard are toxic to native butterfly larvae.



Chinese Silvergrass *Miscanthus sinensis*

Grass family (Poaceae)

G

Size: Forms dense clumps that grow 3-7 feet tall. (A)

Leaves: Has slender, upright or somewhat arching leaves up to 18 inches long, with silvery midribs, sharp tips and rough margins. Can be striped in appearance. (B)

Flower: Flowers occur September-October and are feathery, fan-shaped, silvery to pink in color, and 2 feet long at the end of stalks. (C)

Fruit: Seeds are wind dispersed. (C)

Habitat: Adaptable to nutrient-poor, well-drained soil types such as roadsides and utility right-of-ways and prefers full sun.

Other: A potential source for bioenergy production. Similar to native switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum* which has much more narrow leaves.

**A****B****C**

Autumn Olive *Elaeagnus umbellata*
Oleaster family (Elaeagnaceae)

S

Size: 3 - 20 foot tall shrub with thorny branches which loses its leaves in the fall. It is easily recognized by the silvery, dotted underside of the leaves. (A)

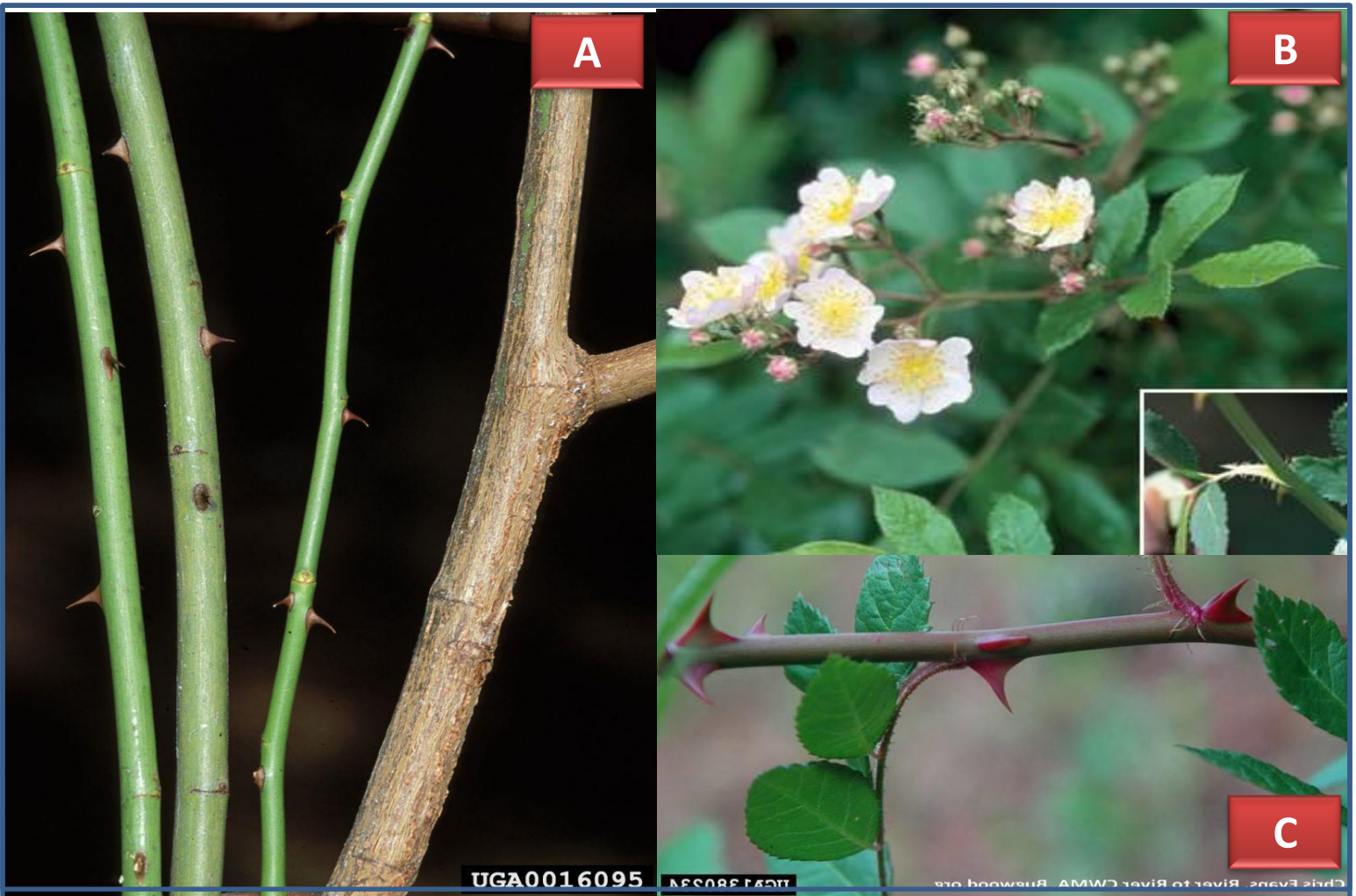
Leaves: Bright green to gray green above and silver scaly beneath. (A, C)

Flower: Small, yellowish tubular flowers are abundant and occur in clusters of 5 to 10 near the stems from February to June. (B)

Fruit: Round, red, juicy fruit, finely dotted with silvery to silvery-brown scales. Each fruit contains one seed. Fruits ripen from August to November.

Habitat: Old fields, woodland edges, and other disturbed areas. It can form a dense shrub layer which displaces native species and closes open areas.

Other: Drought tolerant and thrives in a variety of conditions; capable of fixing nitrogen in its roots.



Multiflora Rose *Rosa multiflora*

Rose family (Rosaceae)

S

Size: 3-6 feet in height as a shrub but can reach 10 feet as a vine. (A)

Leaves: 5-11 sharply toothed small leaves in pairs with one at the end. (C) Base of leaves has fringed stipules. (B inset)

Flower: Clusters of fragrant white to pinkish flowers, 1 inches wide, appear in May. (B)

Fruit: Small, bright red fruits develop during the summer and remain through winter. Fruits are eaten and spread by birds.

Habitat: Tolerates a wide range of habitats and conditions.

Other: Produces an estimated one million seeds per year, which can remain in the soil for up to 20 years. Promoted for use in erosion control and as “living fences” for livestock. Native roses (*Rosa spp.*) have pink flowers and no fringed stipules.



S

Privets Border privet *Ligustrum obtusifolium*

California privet *L. ovalifolium*, Chinese privet *L. sinense*

European privet *L. vulgare*

Olive family (Oleaceae)

Size: 8-20 feet tall, trunks have multiple stems with long leafy branches. Species are distinguished by presence and type of hairs on stems.

Leaves: Opposite, entire 1-3 inch long leaves, oval to oblong in shape. (A)

Flower: Cluster at branch tips and are small, white, fragrant, and tubular with 4 petals, occur May to July. (B)

Fruit: Small, bluish-black with one seed that mature late summer-fall. (A)

Habitat: Thrive in floodplains, fields, disturbed forests and edges. They form dense thickets and shade out native plants.

Other: Can be confused with Viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.), but flowers are in upright, rounded clusters on Viburnums.



English Ivy *Hedera helix*
Ginseng family (Araliaceae)



Size: Evergreen climbing vine that attaches to surfaces by root-like structure that exude a glue-like substance. (A)

Leaves: Leaves are alternate, dark green, waxy, and leathery. Can range from unlobed to 3-5 lobes; typically green with whitish veins. (C)

Flower: Flowers are small, greenish-yellow and occur in globe-like starburst type groups at tips of flowering stems in late summer to early fall. (B)

Fruit: Fruits are black with a fleshy outer layer and stone-like seeds.

Habitat: Flourishes under shady to full sun conditions in soils that are fertile and moist, but it is intolerant of drought and salinity. Spreads vigorously and grows along the ground and into the canopy, can block sunlight from reaching host tree.

Other: Leaves and berries are toxic to humans, but birds spread the fruits.



Kudzu *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*
Pea family (Fabaceae)

V

Size: Climbing vine may extend 32-100 feet long, with stems 4 inches thick. Massive roots can reach 7 inches thick or more, 6 feet or more in length and weigh up to 400 pounds; up to 30 vines may grow from a single plant. (B)

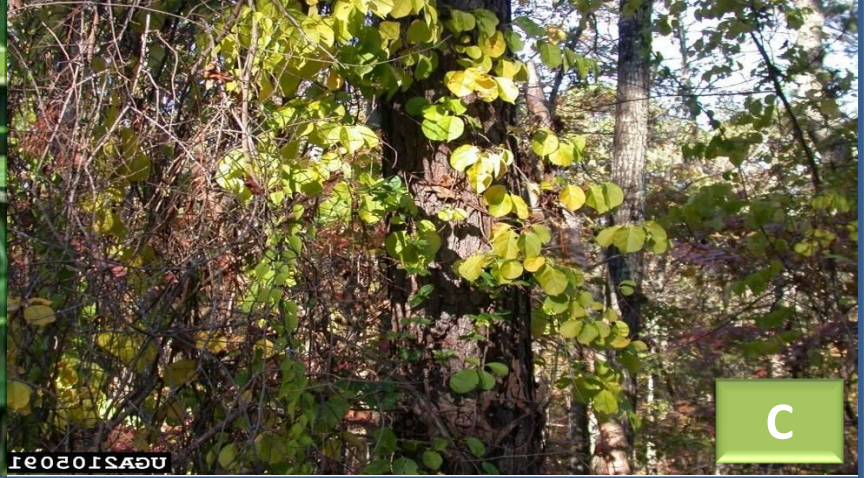
Leaves: Leaves are alternate and compound with 3 broad leaflets up to 4 inches across, which may be entire or lobed with hairy edges. (C)

Flower: During late summer, flowers appear in upright clusters, are ½ inch long, purple and fragrant. (A)

Fruit: Fruits are brown, hairy, flattened seed pods which can contain 10 seeds. Spreads locally by vines that root to form new plants and is pollinated by the giant resin bee.

Habitat: Grows under a wide range of conditions and prefers open, sunny habitats on forest edges or roadsides.

Other: Can grow as rapidly as 1 foot per day!



Oriental Bittersweet *Celastrus orbiculatus*
Bittersweet family (Celastraceae)



Size: Climbing vine that can grow to 60 feet long and 4 inches around. Bark is brown, while smooth twigs can be grey to dark brown in color.

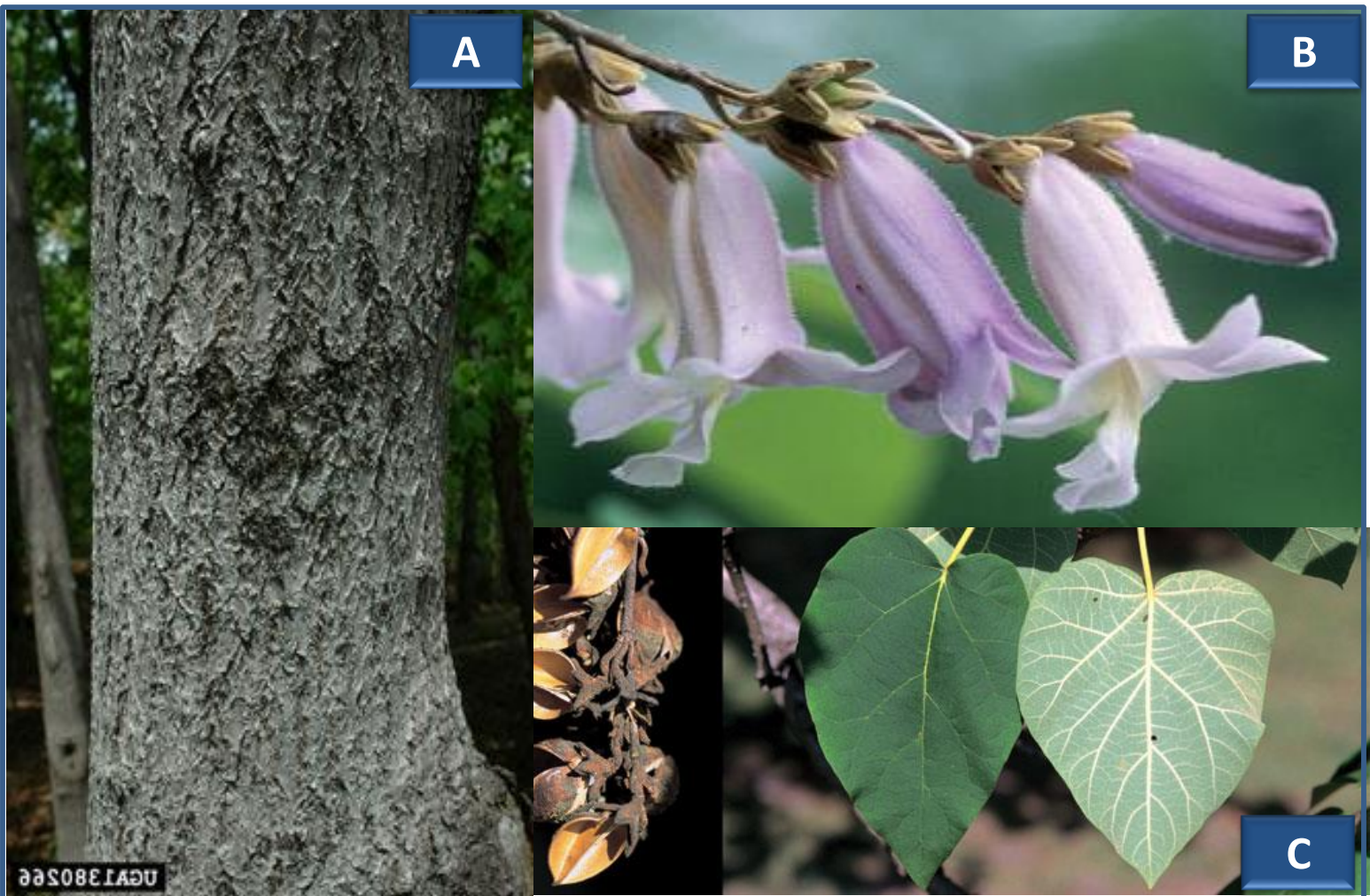
Leaves: Leaves are light green, elliptical to circular in shape, and measure 2-5 inches long; edges of leaves have “teeth.” (A)

Flower: Small greenish-white flowers develop from May to June between the leaves and the stem.

Fruit: The small, globe-like (globose) fruits turn from green to yellow as they ripen, before splitting to reveal scarlet berries that last into winter. (B)

Habitat: Old home sites, fields, and road edges. The fast growing vines can quickly shade and outcompete other plants, as well as kill large trees. (C)

Other: Closely resembles American Bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) which has flowers and fruits at the end of the branches and narrower leaves.



Princess Tree *Paulownia tomentosa*
Paulownia family (Paulowniaceae)

T

Size: Deciduous (drops leaves at the end of growing season) tree growing 30-60 feet in height. Bark is thin, gray-brown with shallow features. (A)

Leaves: Large, paired and generally oval to heart-shaped, 6-16 inches across; is also hairy on the upper surface. (C)

Flower: Showy, pale violet and fragrant, appear in spring before the leaves in upright clusters. (B)

Fruit: Thousands of small winged seeds are contained in four-compartmented oval capsules. (C)

Habitat: Adapts very well and can be found mostly on edge habitat. Can tolerate infertile, acidic soils and drought conditions.

Other: Can sprout from buds on stems and roots, allowing it to survive fire and cutting. It is highly prized for carving and has medicinal purposes.



Tree of Heaven *Ailanthus altissima*
Quassia family (Simaroubaceae)

T

Size: Can reach 70 feet tall. Wood is soft and creamy white to light brown in color; twigs are smooth and pale grey to light brown. (A)

Leaves: Leaves are alternate, 1-4 feet long, compound with 11-25 smaller leaflets, each with one to several glandular teeth near the base. Broken leaves smell like burnt peanut butter. (C)

Flower: Large, showy clusters of small yellowish-green flowers produced during June.

Fruit: Fruits are flat, twisted, single-seeded samaras produced in summer.(B)

Habitat: Adaptable to wide range of soil types and conditions, grows best in full sun and is tolerant of drought. By the use of chemicals, it can also prevent the growth of other plants.

Other: Called stinking sumac. Bark has pale vertical lines different from native sumacs which have narrow horizontal markings.



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