

Blunt-leaved Privet

Ligustrum obtusifolium



Pictures By (From top to bottom):
Dendrology at Virginia Tech.

Invasive Plants are a Threat to:

- **Forests and wetlands**
- **Native plants**
- **Perennial gardens**
- **Wildlife**
- **Lakes and rivers**
- **Human Health**
- **Farmland**

Description:

Ligustrum obtusifolium is a semi-evergreen to deciduous, large foliage shrub in the olive family. Its leaves are opposite, simple, oblong, 1 to 2 inches long, dark green above and lighter below with a rounded or blunt tip and base. Blunt-leaved privet has short panicles of white flowers that are often dense, very fragrant and appear in late spring. The fruit is shiny and blue-black with a white waxy bloom, smaller than ¼ inch in diameter that ripens in the fall and persists into the following Spring. The bark is smooth and grayish brown with short, light colored horizontal lenticels.

Distribution:

In United States, *Ligustrum obtusifolium* can be found throughout the eastern and south-central states. It can be seen along roadsides, in old fields and in other disturbed habitats and in a variety of undisturbed natural areas, including bogs, wetlands, floodplains, old fields, calcareous glades and barrens, and mesic hardwood forests. In Indiana, privet is locally abundant throughout the state in riparian forests.

Problem:

Ligustrum obtusifolium grows readily from seed or from root and stump sprouts. It can escape from cultivation when the fruits are consumed by wildlife, particularly birds, which often excrete the seeds at distant locations where they may germinate. It invades natural areas such as floodplain forests and woodlands. It also displaces shrubs in regenerating communities and remains persistent in these areas. It forms dense thickets that out compete many kinds of native vegetation.

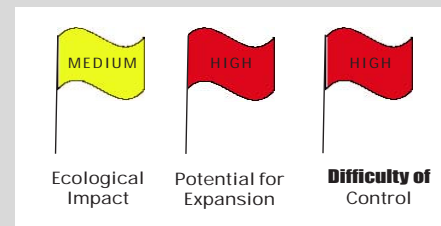
Origin:

There are approximately 50 *Ligustrum* species that are native to Europe, North Africa, and Asia. *Ligustrum* spp. have been cultivated and developed into several horticultural varieties, and were introduced to North America as a common hedge in landscaping. *Ligustrum obtusifolium* is native to Japan.



Picture By: Katherine Howe

IPSAWG Ranking:



IPSAWG Recommendation:

- Do not buy, sell or plant blunt-leaved privet in Indiana.
- Help by eradicating blunt-leaved privet on your property.
- Also, avoid other species of privet (*Ligustrum* spp.); these species are considered invasive in many parts of the Midwest.

This ranking illustrates the results of an assessment conducted by the **Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group (IPSAWG)**, which is made up of many organizations and agencies concerned about invasive plant species. IPSAWG's goal is to assess which plant species may threaten natural areas in Indiana and develop recommendations to reduce their use in the state.

For more information about IPSAWG and the assessment tool used to rank invasive species, visit their website:

www.invasivespecies.IN.gov

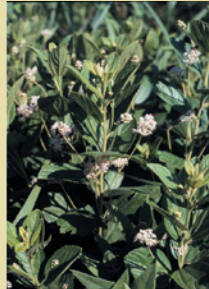
ALTERNATIVES to Blunt-leaved Privet:



Gray Dogwood
(*Cornus racemosa*)



Fragrant Sumac
(*Rhus aromatica*)



New Jersey Tea
(*Ceanothus americanus*)



Ninebark
(*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

Pictures By (Top to Bottom): Dendrology at Virginia Tech and D.E. Herman, Larry Allain and William S. Justice @ USDA - NRCS Plants Database.

Control Methods:

Manual, mechanical and chemical methods are all useful in varying degrees in controlling *Ligustrum obtusifolium*. Mowing and cutting are appropriate for small populations or environmentally sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used. It can also be effectively controlled by the manual removal of young seedlings. Plants should be pulled as soon as they are large enough to grasp but before they produce seeds. There are no known biological controls. However, herbicide treatments can

be very effective. One method is to cut stems at or near ground level and apply a 25% solution of glyphosate and water or triclopyr and water to the cut stump. The second method is to apply a 25% triclopyr

and 75% horticultural oil to the basal parts of the shrub to a height of 12-15 inches from the ground. Both methods are effective throughout the year.

Always read and follow pesticide labels.



A stand of privet. Picture By: The Nature Conservancy.

Eight Easy Ways to Combat Invasive Plants

You can **help stop** the spread of **invasive plants** by following these **8 easy guidelines**:

1. Ask for only non-invasive species when you acquire plants. Request that nurseries and garden centers sell only non-invasive plants.
2. Seek information on invasive plants. Sources include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies.
3. Scout your property for invasive species, and remove invasives before they become a problem. If plants can't be removed, at least prevent them from going to seed.
4. Clean your boots before and after visiting a natural area to prevent the spread of invasive plant seeds.
5. Don't release aquarium plants into the wild.
6. Volunteer at local parks and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.
7. Help educate your community through personal contacts and in such settings as garden clubs and civic groups.
8. Support public policies and programs to control invasive plants.

For More Information:

On this assessment and IPSAWG:

IPSAWG
www.invasivespecies.IN.gov

On identification and control techniques:

The Nature Conservancy's Wildland Weeds
www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu

On native plant alternatives and sources:

Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society
www.inpaws.org

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