EUONYMUS JAPONICUS (CELASTRACEAE) NEW TO THE ARKANSAS FLORA

BRETT E. SERVISS  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Henderson State University  
Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71999  
servisb@hsu.edu

JONATHAN W. HARDAGE  
2268 Highway 128  
Bismarck, Arkansas 71929  
jh201098@reddies.hsu.edu

BROOK L. OLSEN  
P.O. Box 484  
Bismarck, Arkansas 71929  
brooklolsen@gmail.com

JAMES H. PECK  
P.O. Box 705  
Cedar Key, Florida 32625  
james.peckck@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Euonymus japonicus Thunb. is reported here as new to the Arkansas flora. This is the first definitive record of this species outside of cultivation in Arkansas. One spontaneous plant of E. japonicus was discovered growing at the edge of disturbed, urban woods in Clark County. Photographs of the plant in habitat are provided.

In 2017, a single, spontaneous/escaped plant of Euonymus japonicus Thunb. (Japanese spindle tree) was documented at the edge of a large expanse of highly disturbed, urban woods in Clark County (Figs. 1–2). The site, although large, is surrounded mostly by residential areas, with Rose Hill Cemetery about one block northeast of the location. No cultivated plants of E. japonicus were in the immediate vicinity, but a large, cultivated plant of E. japonicus is present in the Rose Hill Cemetery. Bird–mediated dispersal of seeds from the cultivated plant of E. japonicus is the presumed source of the spontaneous E. japonicus individual. Escaped E. japonicus should be expected elsewhere in Arkansas, particularly in the vicinity of where plants of the species are cultivated.

Euonymus japonicus is a large, evergreen shrub or small tree to 5 meters tall, or sometimes more, that is native to Japan (Bailey & Bailey 1976; Krüssmann 1977; Ma & Funston 2008). This species is grown in the southern USA, including Arkansas, as an ornamental for its glossy, tightly–clustered, evergreen foliage and ease of cultivation. Euonymus japonicus has been reported previously as a component of the naturalized floras of a few eastern states (Diamond 2013; Hannick et al. 2013; Kartesz 2015; Weakley 2015; USDA, NRCS 2017).

Voucher specimen. Arkansas. Clark Co.: One spontaneous/escaped plant growing at edge of highly disturbed, urban woods, off 12th St., about one block SW of the intersection of 12th St. and Main St., Arkadelphia, 29 Sep 2017, Serviss 8600 (HEND).
Three species of non–native *Euonymus* currently are known from the Arkansas flora. In Arkansas, *E. japonicus* is similar to some forms of *E. fortunei* (wintercreeper) and may be confused with it. Non–native *Euonymus* species in Arkansas may readily be distinguished using the following key.

1. Plants deciduous; young stems quadrangular in cross section, the angles often with corky wings
   
   1. Plants evergreen (sometimes partially evergreen in *E. fortunei*); stems terete in cross section, not winged.

   2. Plant liana-like
   3. Growth form with branches procumbent, sprawling, or ascending .......... **Euonymus fortunei**
   3. Growth form erect ....................................................................................... **Euonymus japonicus**

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Figure 1. Spontaneous plant of *Euonymus japonicus* in disturbed, urban woods in Clark County, Arkansas (plant was ca. 1.5–2 m tall). A plant of *Ligustrum sinense* (Chinese privet) also may be seen in the photo.
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LITERATURE CITED


