



Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Common and Bigleaf Periwinkle

Vinca minor L. and *Vinca major* L.

Vinca minor



Photo: Dan Tenaglia, www.missouriplants.com,
www.invasive.org

Background:

This ornamental ground cover was introduced from Europe into the U.S. in the 1700s. It is still commonly sold in the nursery trade and planted by gardeners.

Range:

Vinca minor is more prevalent in the east and Midwest, while *Vinca major* is more wide-spread in the southwest.



Vinca minor's range map

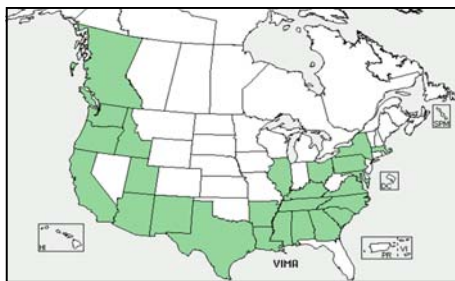
Description:

These are evergreen vines that tend to trail along the ground up to three feet. Violet to blue pinwheel-shaped flowers bloom from April to May (sometimes later). Leaves are opposite, around an inch long and green, although some varieties have variegated leaves.



Vinca major

Photo: James Miller, USDA FS, www.invasive.org



Vinca major's range map

(Images courtesy of the [USDA PLANTS database](http://www.usda.gov/plants/database))

Habitat:

Found around old homesite plantings, spreading into open fields and dense canopied forests.

Biology and Spread:

The viability of its seeds has yet to be reported. Plants spread vegetatively by rhizomes.

Ecological Threat:

This plant can form thick mats and extensive infestations under even dense, dark canopies. It has the ability to take over an understory, removing habitat for native vegetation.



Vinca minor

Photo: Dan Tenaglia, www.missouriplants.com,
www.invasive.org

How to Control this Species:

Manual

Vincas can be removed by digging up the plants, but all roots must be removed to prevent re-sprouting.

Chemical

Runners may also be raised with a rake and mown close to the ground. Spring mowing can be followed up with a foliar application of a glyphosate herbicide to the regrowth.

Look-A-Likes:

Vincas may resemble the native partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens* L.), the invasive Madagascar periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*) and the invasive wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*).



Photo: Jessica Sprajcar, DCNR

Native Alternatives:

Many versatile native ground-covers are available:



Photo: Joseph O'Brien, USDA FS
www.forestryimages.org



Photo: James Miller, USDA FS,
www.forestryimages.org

References:

Invasive Exotic Plant Pest Tutorial:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/periwinkle.htm>

National Park Service Vinca factsheet: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/vimi.htm>

For More Information:

To learn more about invasive plants in Pennsylvania, here are some useful resources:

DCNR Invasive Species Site:

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/conservationscience/invasivespecies/index.htm>

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, National Park Service:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>

Invasive Plants Field and Reference Guide, U.S. Forest Service:

http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf