



INVASIVE PLANTS OF OHIO

Fact Sheet 8

Multiflora Rose

Rosa multiflora



DESCRIPTION:

Multiflora rose is a thorny shrub with arching stems (canes). The compound leaves are divided into 5-11 sharply-toothed leaflets. The base of each leaf stalk bears a pair of fringed stipules. In late spring, clusters of showy, fragrant, white to pale pink flowers appear; each flower about an inch across. Small, bright red fruits (rose hips) develop during the summer and remain on the plant through the winter.

This rose was introduced from Japan, Korea and eastern China in 1866 as a rootstock for ornamental roses. In the 1930s, it was widely promoted as a “living fence” to confine livestock and was planted for soil conservation and wildlife programs. It is frequent throughout Ohio.

HABITAT:

Multiflora rose prefers sunny to semi-shaded habitats with well-drained soils, but can tolerate a wide range of habitats including mesic upland and flood plain woods, forest edges, old fields, savannas, prairies, fens, roadsides, fencerows and lawns.

INVASIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

Multiflora rose reproduces by seed and by forming new plants from root sprouts. Fruits are readily sought by birds which are the primary dispersers of its seeds. It has been estimated that an average multiflora rose plant may produce a million seeds per year, which may remain viable in the soil for up to twenty years.



Map based on records as of 2010.

CONTROL:

Mechanical:

Pulling or removing individual plants is effective when plants are small. A digging tool should be used to remove the entire plant. Special care should be taken to ensure that all roots are removed to prevent re-sprouting. Mowing of large shrubs can provide partial control by restricting top growth and spread, but may need to be done repeatedly. Prescribed burning can be conducted early in the growing season to control severe infestations if there is enough fuel under the shrubs.



Chemical:

Multiflora rose is generally relatively easy to control using herbicide application. Application of systemic herbicides, such as Roundup, Glypro, Escort XP, or Garlon 3A, directly to the foliage is the most effective control method. Other herbicides such as Garlon 4 may be applied to cut stems or as a basal bark application, combined with a surfactant or basal oil.

Biological:

Rose rosette virus was first found in Ohio in 1987. The virus is spread by a tiny native mite. Symptoms include red and purplish vein mosaics and dwarfed foliage. Infected plants usually die within 2-5 years of infection. This virus may have the potential for eliminating multiflora rose in areas where it grows in dense patches.

A seed-infesting wasp, the European rose chalcid (*Megastigmus aculeatus*), is another potential biocontrol. An important drawback to both the rose rosette virus and the European rose chalcid is their potential impact to other rose species and cultivars.

Credits and additional information:

Plant Conservation Alliance-Alien Plant Working Group
Ohio Department of Natural Resources, www.ohiodnr.gov
The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Chapter
Cornell University, www.invasiveplants.net
OIPC webpage, www.oipc.info