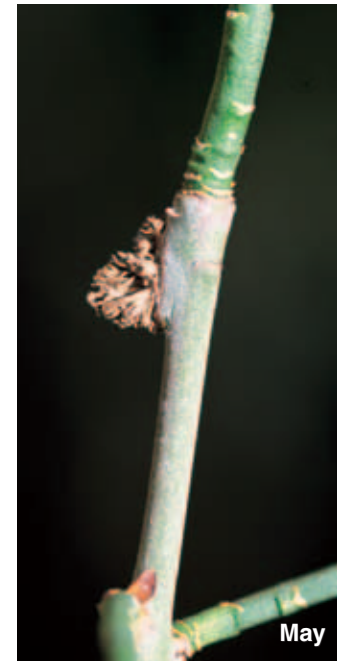


Winter Creeper

Invasive
VINES



Euonymus fortunei* (Tursz.) Hand.-Maz. EUFO5*Celastraceae**Synonym: *E. hederaceus* Champ. ex Benth.

Other common names: climbing euonymus, gaiety

Plant. Evergreen woody vine climbing to 70 feet (22 m) and clinging by aerial roots or rooting at nodes, or standing as a shrub to 3 feet (1 m) in height. Leaves thick and dark green or green- or gold-white variegated on green stems. The nonflowering juvenile climbing phase, upon reaching high enough into the crowns of trees, develops into a flowering phase that does not have climbing rootlets. Pinkish-to-red capsules splitting open in fall to expose fleshy orange seeds.

Stem. Twigs stout, lime green, and hairless becoming increasingly dusted and streaked with light-gray reddish corky bark. Patches or lines of protruding aerial roots grow on lower surfaces or where touching supporting structures. Branches opposite, leaf scars thin upturned white crescents, and branch scars jutting and containing a light semicircle. Older stems covered with gray corky bark becoming fissured and then checked.

Leaves. Opposite, broadly oval, moderately thick, with bases tapering to petiole. One to 2.5 inches (2.5 to 6 cm) long and 1 to 1.8 inches (2.5 to 4.5 cm) wide. Margins finely crenate, somewhat turned under, to wavy. Blades smooth glossy, hairless, dark green with whitish veins above and light green beneath. Some varieties variegated, with white or golden margins. Petioles 0.15 to 0.4 inch (0.4 to 1 cm) long.

Flowers. May to July. Axillary clusters of small greenish-yellow inconspicuous flowers at the ends of Y-shaped stems, each flower 0.1 inch (2 to 3 mm) wide. Five petals. Pistils soon elongating with fruit.

Fruit and seeds. September to November. Dangling paired or single pinkish-to-red capsules, 0.2 to 0.4 inch (5 to 10 mm) long, splitting to reveal 4 tightly clustered seeds with orange-to-red fleshy coats.

Ecology. Forms dense ground cover and can climb trees, eventually overtopping them. Climbing vines produce fruit. Cold and shade tolerant, occurring under dense stands but avoiding wet areas. Colonizes by trailing and climbing vines that root at nodes, and fleshy-coated seeds spread by birds, other animals, and water.

Resembles the larger-leaved species of blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.) but their leaves are alternate. **Also resembles** native partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens* L.), a creeping vine with opposite oval or cordate leaves less than 1 (2.5 cm) inch long and wide, white twin flowers and red berries; and the nonnative vincas (*Vinca* spp.), trailing vines with similar opposite leaves but margins are rolled under and flowers violet-to-blue pinwheels.

History and use. Introduced from Asia in 1907. Ornamental ground cover.

Distribution. Found throughout the region except FL, LA, TX, and OK with scattered dense infestations in every other State. Especially frequent in MS, AL, NC, KY, and central VA.

Winter Creeper**3042**

October