
Chinese Privet, European Privet

Ligustrum sinense, *Ligustrum vulgare*

Identification:

Chinese and European Privet are the most common two of several species of privet that are not native to the U.S. and are invasive after escaping ornamental plantings that started in the 1700s. Privet is a stout, many branched, large shrub or small tree in the olive family (Oleaceae). Leaves are oppositely arranged on the twig, oval to elliptical in shape, and mostly evergreen. Privet can reach heights of 15 to 20 feet in good conditions. Flowers are clustered at ends of branches, white in color, and appear in late spring. Fruits are small, grainy, blue/black drupes that contain one to four hard seeds each; the seeds persist into the winter. Privet is often referred to locally as "hedge."

Origin: Europe, North Africa, and Asia

Habitat:

Privet grows in a variety of conditions and is highly adaptive, but prefers bottomlands and riparian areas with moist, rich soil. Often spreads from bottomlands and disturbed areas into adjacent forests, fields, and residential areas. Highly shade tolerant.

Ecological Threat:

Privet is a very aggressive invading plant that often forms impenetrable thickets in riparian and low-lying areas, pushing out all native plant life. If allowed to become large enough to seed, privet will convert the ground underneath larger specimens to a carpet of seedlings that push out all other plant life. Privet is very hard to control once established, especially if allowed to go to seed even for one year. Herbicide treatments must usually be repeated several times to establish complete control.

Native alternatives:

Dog hobble (*Leucothoe fontanesiana*), pictured below

Silky dogwood (*Cornus amomum*)

Tag alder (*Alnus serrulata*)



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