

**Impacts:** Japanese barberry grows very densely in almost all natural areas. Barberry is known to alter the soil pH, nitrogen levels, biological activity, and leaf litter. Wildlife also disregard from eating it because of its sharp spines.

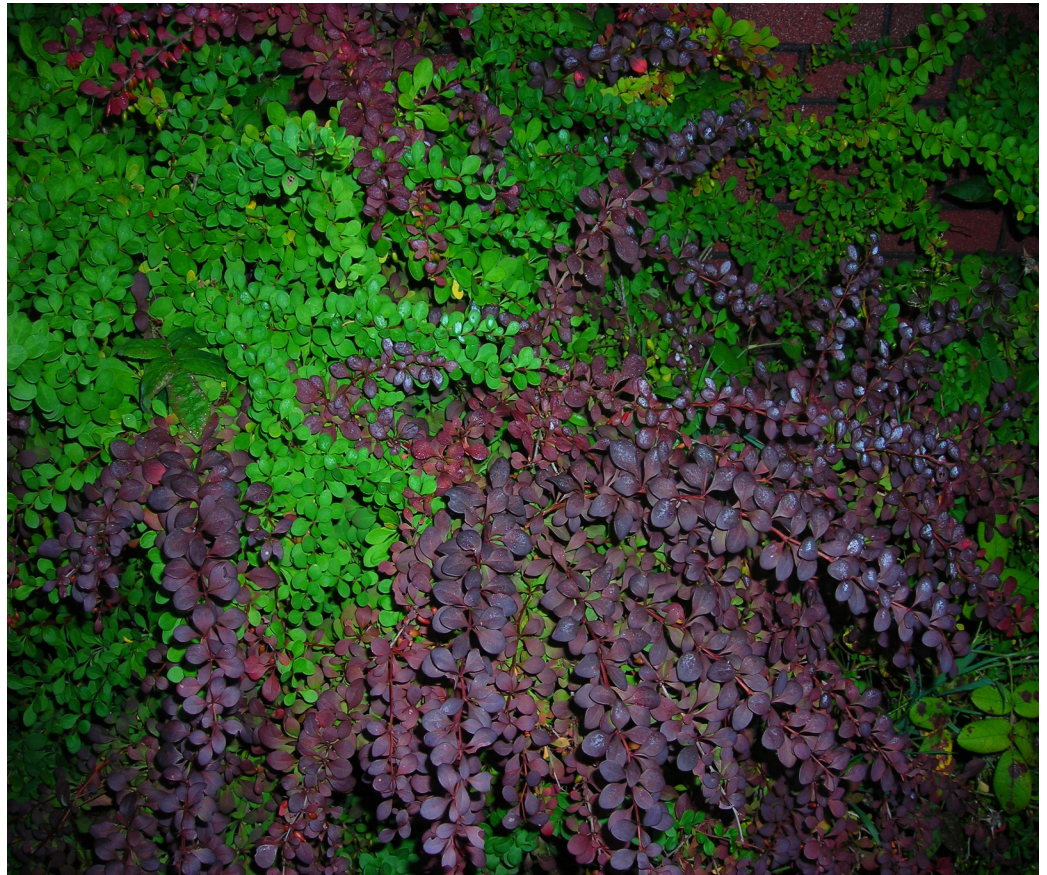


**Suspected Means of Introduction:** Japanese barberry was introduced to the U.S. as an ornamental plant in 1875 in the form of seeds. Japanese barberry was later promoted as a substitute for common barberry, which was planted by settlers for hedgerows, dye and jam.

# BioBullies

## Japanese Barberry

*Berberis thunbergii*



**Description:** Japanese barberry is a dense shrub, ranging from 2 to 8 feet high. The branches are dark brown in color with a single, very sharp spine at the base of each node. The leaves are oval or teardrop in shape, grow to be 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches, and range in color from green to blue-green to purple. Flowers bloom in early spring and are a pale yellow color. The flowers are in clusters of two to four and produce bright red berries about 1/3 inch long. When the bark or roots are scratched, a bright yellow inner wood is shown.

Native Range: Japan

## Resources for Identification and Control of Japanese Barberry

Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership

University of Illinois Extension - Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, and Vermilion Counties

Plant Profile Database - USDA

Weed of the Week - USDA Forest Service

Midwest Invasive Plant Network



# Japanese Barberry

## *Berberis thunbergii*



**Habitat:** Barberry is shade-tolerant, drought resistant, and adaptable to a variety of habitats, including woodlands, open fields, wetlands and disturbed areas. It prefers full sun to part shade but will still flower and fruit in forested areas.

**Biology:** Japanese barberry spreads by seed and by vegetative expansion. Barberry produces large numbers of seeds that have a high germination rate. Barberry seed is transported to new locations by birds and small mammals that eat it. Vegetative spread through branches touching the ground that can root to form

new plants, and through root fragments remaining in the soil that can sprout to form new plants.

**Control Methods:** For best results shrubs should also be mowed or cut repeatedly, in late summer, prior to seed production. Small plants can be pulled by hand. However, due to the amount of spines on the plant, precaution should be taken and gloves should be worn. The root system is shallow, making it easy to pull plants from the ground, and it is important to get the entire root system.