

KENTUCKY'S LEAST WANTED! PLANT 2014

PORCELAIN-BERRY

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata



LESLIE J. MEHRHOFF



STEVE WANNING

PORCELAIN-BERRY (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) is a woody, deciduous vine that climbs to 25 feet. Vines climb via tendrils and are similar to native wild grapes and other native species of *Ampelopsis*. The deep green alternate leaves are palmately 3-5 lobed, deeply dissected, broadly ovate with a cordate base, and have coarsely toothed margins. Non-showy clusters

of greenish-white flowers form in leaf axils by mid-summer. The 2-4 seeded fruits start out pale lilac, turn green and finally mature to bright blue. Porcelain-berry invades open and wooded habitats, spreading by seed and vegetatively. The berries are attractive to birds and small animals. Infestations near water often spread downstream and it is believed that seed disperses

by water. Porcelain-berry spreads quickly in areas with full to partial sunlight, but appears less tolerant of the heavy shade of a mature forest. As an infestation grows, it covers nearby vegetation, shading out native plants and destroying habitat. A native of northeastern Asia, porcelain-berry was originally cultivated around the 1870s as a bedding and landscape plant.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES



MELODY LYTLE

PEPPER-VINE (*Ampelopsis arborea*) grows to 35 feet or more and can be used as a groundcover or trained to climb a trellis. Its dark green leaves are bipinnately compound with coarsely toothed leaflets. Blooming in July and August, the inconspicuous flowers attract a variety of pollinators. The berries range in color from pale pink to purplish-black and provide food for songbirds and mammals. Pepper-vine is well-suited to partial shade to full sun and can grow in a variety of soils. Its fast growth can be maintained with regular cutting and mowing.



GENA TODIA

AMERICAN WISTERIA (*Wisteria frutescens*) is a deciduous woody vine that can grow to 30 feet or more. Its showy, fragrant, bluish-purple flowers bloom in drooping clusters 6-9 inches long. Flowers first appear in early summer of the third year following planting. The fruits are brown, bean-like pods that persist until winter. The shiny, dark green leaves are compound, bearing 9-15 opposite leaflets. Vines need regular pruning in order to encourage flowering and to control shape and size. American wisteria grows best in fertile, moist, well-drained soil and full sun. Spring fertilizer will encourage flowering. This plant is an excellent choice for climbing arbors, pergolas, posts, or trellises.



DAVID TAYLOR

RACCOON-GRAPE (*Ampelopsis cordata*) can climb 35-40 feet. It can be trained to a trellis or used as a ground cover in open areas. The leaves resemble those of many grapes. Small nondescript flowers bloom June to July, attracting many different pollinators. The berries can be pink, blue or white and provide food for small mammals and birds. Raccoon-grape will grow in a variety of soils but fairs best in areas that are not excessively dry. It grows best in full sun. Pruning and mowing can be used to maintain the plant within defined bounds.

To heighten awareness of invasive plants that threaten Kentucky's native biodiversity, a Least Wanted plant will be featured in the spring of each year with suggested alternatives.



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