

# Oriental Bittersweet Identification



The most common invasive tree-climbing vine in the Northeastern US is oriental (or Asiatic) bittersweet. It is mostly seen growing up the trunks of trees. When young, the vine has small white dots and sharp buds.



Photo Credit: James H. Miller,  
USDA Forest Service,  
Bugwood.org

As the vines grow, they often intertwine.



Photo Credit: James H. Miller,  
USDA Forest Service,  
Bugwood.org

When the vines grow larger, they take on a whitish hue with dark splotches. The vines will maintain this look for several years.



Photo Credit: James H. Miller,  
USDA Forest Service,  
[Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)



When oriental bittersweet vines get especially large, the bark begins to peel off in layers, and the splotches become less noticeable.



Photo Credit: Chris Evans,  
University of Illinois,  
[Bugwood.org](http://Bugwood.org)



At their worst, oriental bittersweet vines can reach over 6" in diameter, and a single tree can have dozens of vines growing up it. This heavy weight can break tree limbs and even topple the entire tree.





The leaves of oriental bittersweet are slightly oval with edges that are wavy.



The native American bittersweet has longer leaves with sharper edges.



Photos Credit: Chris Evans,  
University of Illinois,  
Bugwood.org



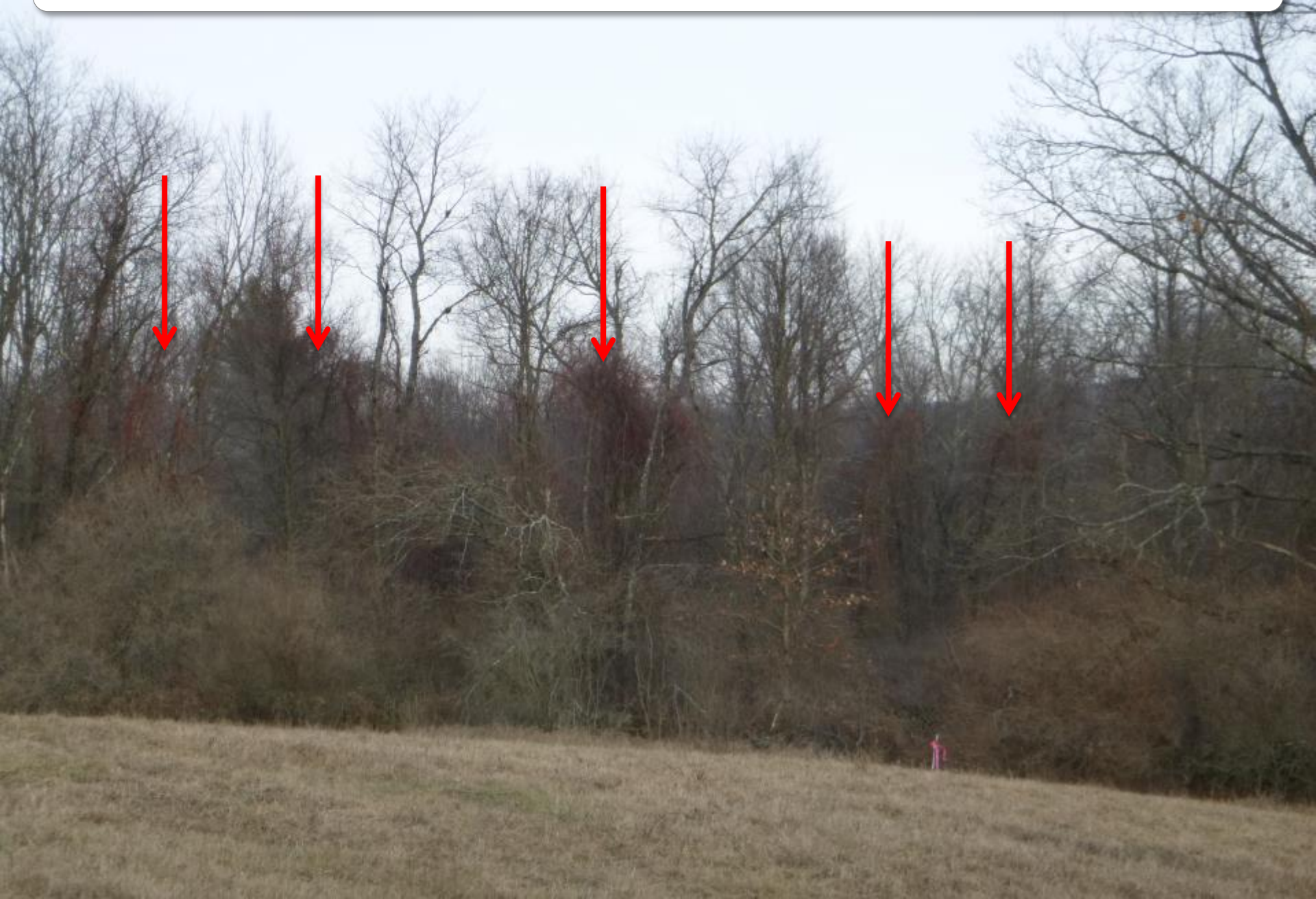
The fruit of oriental bittersweet are abundant red berries with yellow/orange capsules, and are found all over the vine.

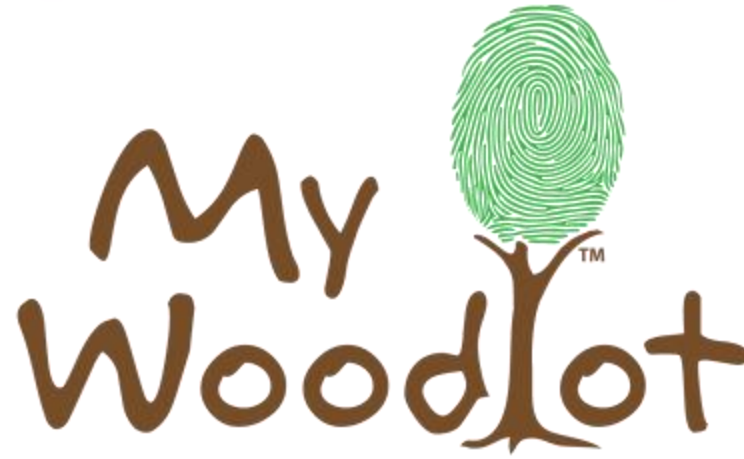


The native American bittersweet fruit is also red, but the capsules are dark orange or red, and are found in distinct clumps.



The abundant fruit means the vine can be spotted from a distance.





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