

INVASIVE PLANTS
IN WISCONSIN

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Invasive plants can thrive and aggressively spread beyond their natural range, disrupting ecosystems. The *Management of Invasive Plants in Wisconsin* series explains how to identify invasive plants and provides common management options. Management methods recommend specific timings for treatment, as well as expected effectiveness.

Japanese barberry

(*Berberis thunbergii*)

Japanese barberry is a round, dense, spiny shrub, typically 2–3' tall, though it may grow up to 6' tall and 6' wide. The branches are reddish brown and deeply grooved with a single, sharp spine at each node. The wood beneath the bark is yellow. It spreads vegetatively through branches that root freely when they touch the ground.

Legal classification in Wisconsin:

All wild plants are restricted. Select varieties/hybrids are also restricted. Consult Wisconsin's invasive species rule (NR 40) for details.

Leaves: Alternate, 0.5–1.5" long, entire, and shaped like a spatula with a narrow base and wide end (spatulate). Color varies depending on the cultivar, but includes green, bluish-green, or dark reddish-purple. Leaves are arranged in clusters above a spine.

Flowers: Mid-spring. Yellow, umbrella-shaped, 0.25" across with 6 petals. Flowers are found along the stem individually or in clusters of 2–4.

Fruits and seeds: Bright-red, oblong berries, 0.3" long. Fruit are found on narrow stalks along the stem individually or in clusters of 2–4. Fruit mature in mid-summer and can persist on shrub into winter.

Roots: Shallow root system. When scratched, the inner layer of the root is yellow.

Similar species: European barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*) is another introduced species that is sometimes invasive. European barberry spines occur in sets of 3, while Japanese barberry spines occur singly.

Ecological threat:

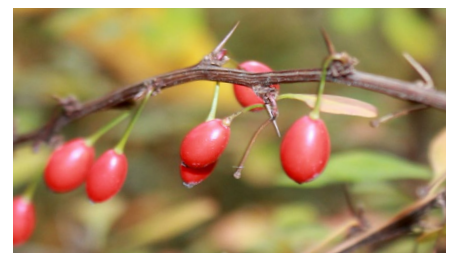
- Invades open and closed canopy forests, woodlands, oak savannas, wetlands, pasture, and meadows. Grows more vigorously on well-drained soils.
- Seeds are readily dispersed by birds.
- Sites infested with Japanese barberry have significantly more deer ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) than sites where Japanese barberry control efforts have taken place or where barberry is not present.

Non-chemical control

Removal

Effectiveness in season: 90–100%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Pulling or digging up small- to medium-sized barberry any time of the year is an effective individual plant control strategy if soil conditions are amenable. Remove the root crown, as Japanese barberry resprouts from that area. Small bushes can be pulled by hand and larger bushes can be pulled using a leverage tool. Digging up soil surrounding larger bushes can facilitate plant removal. If fruiting, avoid movement unless material can be transported without spreading fruit to other locations.



Mowing

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Mow or cut when flowering but prior to fruit production. Mow or cut plants as close to the ground as possible. Mowing or cutting will need to be repeated for a number of years to reduce established populations. Mowing resprouting barberry after initial removal of a plant can prevent reestablishment of the resprouting plant.

Prescribed burning

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: < 50%

Spring burns can kill germinating seedlings and suppress aboveground growth of established plants, depending on fire intensity. After fire, established plants will quickly resprout and reinvade areas. Cutting barberry in spring, followed by a summer burn is the most effective burning regime. Burns must be repeated annually for 2–5 years to suppress established populations. A hand-held propane torch can be effective for treating seedlings or barberry plants that are less than 4" in diameter.

Chemical control

Foliar

Apply directly to individual plants or broadcast across an infested area. Broadcasted foliar applications are typically the most cost-effective treatment in dense infestations. Use lower rates on smaller plants and less dense populations and higher rates on larger plants and denser populations. Absorption of herbicide can be limited with this species, resulting in reduced effectiveness. Including a surfactant at 0.25–0.5% can alleviate any potential reduction. If infestations are mixed with desirable vegetation, applications of herbicide without soil activity in the early spring or late fall can reduce injury to desirable plants, as barberry leafs out earlier and drops leaves later than most desirable vegetation.

dicamba + 2,4-D*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Outlaw

Rate:

broadcast: 28–44 fl oz/A
 (dicamba: 0.2–0.4 lb a.e./A +
 2,4-D: 0.3–0.5 lb a.e./A)
spot: 0.8% (dicamba: 0.01 lb a.e./gal +
 2,4-D: 0.01 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. While plant is fruiting is the most effective treatment time.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided, as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants. Rates > 16 oz/A (0.5 lb a.e./A) may cause stunting and discoloration of sensitive grasses, such as smooth brome.

glyphosate*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 50–70%

Common name: Roundup

Rate:

broadcast: 1.5–3 lb a.e./A
spot: For a 3 lb a.e./gal product.
 1–2% (0.03–0.06 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. While plant is fruiting is the most effective treatment time.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Applications can result in bare ground as glyphosate is not selective. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided, as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

metsulfuron*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Escort

Rate:

broadcast: 1.0–2.0 oz/A
 (0.6–1.2 oz a.i./A)
spot: 0.04 oz/gal (0.02 oz a.i./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out.

Caution: Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present. Remains in the soil for months depending on application rate. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

triclopyr*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Element 4

Rate:

broadcast: 16–32 fl oz/A
 (0.5–1.0 lb a.e./A)
spot: 1–2% (0.04–0.08 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply when target species is actively growing and fully leafed out. While plant is fruiting is the most effective treatment time.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

Cut stump

Cut a stem of a plant near the base and apply herbicide to the cut surface that remains rooted in the ground. Apply as soon as possible after cutting, especially with herbicides mixed in water. If mixing with an oil-based solution, delays in applications can still result in effective control, but for optimal results, applications should be made within one day of cutting. Do not use this method if there is heavy sap flow or if snow covers the cut surface. Use lower rates on smaller plants and higher rates on larger plants.

glyphosate*

Effectiveness in season: 90–100%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Roundup

Rate: For a 3 lb a.e./gal product.
 18–25% (0.5–0.75 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply any time of year.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Applications can result in bare ground as glyphosate is not selective. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided, as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

triclopyr*

Effectiveness in season: 90–100%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Element 4

Rate: 20–25% in oil (0.8–1.0 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply any time of year.

Remarks: Products containing this active ingredient can have different instructions for mixing. Labels will recommend mixing the product in a water- or oil-based carrier (e.g., basal bark oil). Consult the label to determine the appropriate carrier.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided as even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

Basal bark

Apply herbicide in a ring around the entire stem. Applications should be made at least 6" wide (6–18") to the base of a woody stem. Ideal for stems ≤ 6" in diameter. Do not use this method if there is heavy sap flow or if snow covers the application area. Avoid applications if the bark is wet as reduced control may occur. Use lower rates on smaller plants and higher rates on larger plants.

imazapyr*

Effectiveness in season: 50–70%
Season after treatment: 70–90%

Common name: Stalker

Rate: 6–9% in oil (0.1–0.2 lb a.e./gal)

Timing: Apply any time of year.

Remarks: Products containing this active ingredient can have different instructions for mixing. Labels will recommend mixing the product in a water- or oil-based carrier (e.g., basal bark oil). Consult the label to determine the appropriate carrier.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Applications can result in bare ground since imazapyr is not selective and can remain in the soil for several months to more than a year, depending on application rate. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.

triclopyr*

Effectiveness in season: 70–90%
Season after treatment: 90–100%

Common name: Element 4

Rate: 20–30% in oil (0.8–1.2 lb a.e./ gal)

Timing: Apply any time of year.

Remarks: Products containing this active ingredient can have different instructions for mixing. Labels will recommend mixing the product in a water- or oil-based carrier (e.g., basal bark oil). Consult the label to determine the appropriate carrier.

Caution: Use product labeled for aquatic use if potential exists for solution to contact surface waters. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in groundwater contamination. Overspray or drift to desirable plants should be avoided since even minute quantities of the spray may cause severe injury to plants.





Herbicide information is based on label rates and reports by researchers and land managers. Products known to provide effective control or in common use are included. Those that do not provide sufficient control or lack information for effectiveness on target species have been omitted.

References to pesticide products in this publication are for your convenience and not an endorsement of one product over a similar product. You are responsible for using pesticides in accordance with the label directions. *Read the label before any application.*



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