

Scientific Name: *Vinca spp.*

Common Name: Periwinkle

Updated: 5/5/2016

A. Priority: D

A. Description – Common periwinkle, a common invader throughout most of the United States, is an evergreen to semi-evergreen, trailing vine that reaches up to 6.6 ft. (2 m) in length. Vines can reach a height of 6 in. (15.2 cm). The stems are slender, somewhat woody, and green in color. The opposite, glossy leaves are approximately 1 in. (2.5 cm) long and narrowly elliptical in shape. Some varieties have variegated leaf colors. Flowers are violet to blue (possibly white) in color, 1 in. (2.5 cm) wide, 5-petaled and develop in the spring. Common periwinkle invades open to shady forests often around former plantings at old homesites. It forms dense and extensive mats along forest floors that exclude native vegetation. It is native to Europe and was first introduced into North America in the 1700s as an ornamental. It is still commonly sold as an ornamental ground cover.

B. Damage and threats – *Vinca* can form thick mats and extensive infestations under even dense, dark canopies. It has the ability to take over an understory, removing habitat for native vegetation. It spreads vegetatively via rhizomes.

C. Management Options

Mechanical Control: Periwinkle can be carefully pulled to control it. Care must be taken to remove all underground parts as resprouting will occur. Vigorous mowing can also control *Vinca*, but use of an herbicide is recommended for complete eradication.

Chemical Control: Use of a systematic herbicide is the best option to control Periwinkle. We recommend using aquatic formulations of herbicides in this region to limit potentially unwanted effects to the surrounding environment. More details provided in the management techniques below.

- a. Foliar Spray** – This method involves spraying a dilute herbicide directly onto the plants leaves. Application needs to occur when foliage is present, sometime between full leaf and the onset of fall for full effectiveness. Caution should be taken when applying herbicide with this method as non-target plants can easily be killed by drift or overspray. Application should cover at least 80% of the leaves. To treat Periwinkle, use a 2-4% solution of aquatic triclopyr in water with a 0.5% non-ionic surfactant and apply directly to leaves until just before runoff. Air temperatures must be above 65 degrees and winds should be lower than 5 mph.

D. Recommended Management Strategy

- a.** We recommend foliar spraying Periwinkle as described above.
- b.** In areas where a risk to non-target vegetation is present, wait until a warm day (temperature above 50 degrees) during the dormant season and foliar spray all vegetation.
- c.** Repeated treatments will need to occur over several years to ensure control.

E. Additional and Updated Information

For additional information including photographs and the most up to date control recommendations please visit www.wachng.org/Plants.