ID Guide

Mile-a-minute Weed

(Persicaria perfoliata)

Habitat: Terrestrial, prefers wet areas
Family name: Polygonaceae
Common name: Devil's Tail

Mile-a-minute weed stand

Description:
Mile-a-minute weed is an herbaceous, annual vine with delicate, highly branched stems that are covered by small, curved spines.

Mile-a-minute weed leaves

The alternate leaves are triangular, light green, one to three inches wide and barbed on the underside.

Round leaf-like structures called ocreae surround the stem. It is from there that the inconspicuous flowers and fruits arise.

From mid-July though the first frost, green fruits appear, turning a metallic blue colour as the season goes on.

Mile-a-minute weed fruit

Mile-a-minute weed flower bud

This plant readily colonizes disturbed areas along forest edges, wetlands, stream banks and roadsides.

It needs regular sunlight to thrive and prefers high soil moisture.

There are several other vines with triangular-shaped leaves that may be confused with mile-a-minute, including halbard-leaved tearthumb (*Polygonum arifolium*), climbing false buckwheat

Mile-a-minute weed flower

Mile-a-minute weed flower stem

(*Polygonum scandens*), wild morning glory (*Ipomoeae pupurea*) and hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*).

The presence of spines and ocreae will let you know that it is indeed mile-a-minute.

Its fast growth is one way that the plant spreads, but its seeds are the primary means.

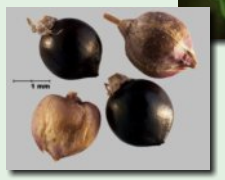
Mile-a-minute weed leaves, stem and fruit

Mile-a-minute weed leaves, stem and fruit

spread the seeds in their droppings.

Seeds are also buoyant for up to nine days in water spreading by streams and floods.

The self-pollinating plant, produces fruits and viable seeds without assistance from pollinators and reproduces successfully until the first frost.



Mile-a-minute weed flower seeds

The plant is a prolific seeder, producing many seeds on a single plant over a long season, from June until October warmer climates and a slightly shorter season in more northern geographic areas.

It can cover as much as 9.1 m in a single season, maybe even more in more southern geographic areas .

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