

Celastraceae

staff-tree family

Nova Scotia has 2 species of the approximately 800 occurring worldwide in 50 genera. Woody plants with simple leaves; flowers perfect although occasionally unisexual, small with alternating petals and stamens, 4-5-merous. Ovary hypogynous. Fruit a capsule.

Key to genera

Stems not twining, leaves opposite.

Euonymus

Stems twining, leaves alternate.

Celastrus

***Celastrus* L.**

We have one species out of three reported for North America. Plants are dioecious, woody, twining; flowers small and white-green, 5-parted. The male flowers have a poorly developed pistil, and female flowers have non-functional, reduced stamens. Seeds are enclosed in a red aril.

***Celastrus orbiculata* Thunb.**

Oriental Bittersweet; célastre asiatique



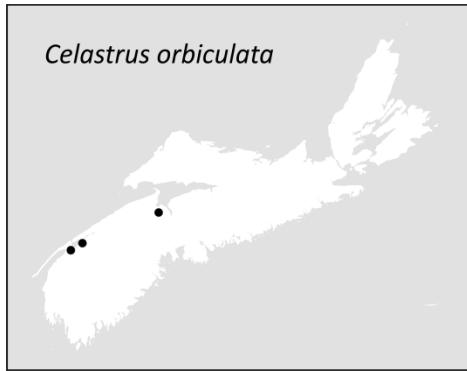
Photo by Sean Blaney

Leaves are nearly round, deciduous; the flowers are borne in axillary cymes. This species is considered a serious invasive in some parts of its range.

Flowers in June.

Known from thickets, cutover areas; a garden escape

Currently records exist for Upper Clements, Annapolis Co. ;



Wolffville, Kings Co. and Digby.

Occurring throughout eastern North America from ON, QC, NB and NS south to AR, TN and GA. Introduced from Asia.

Euonymus L.



Fifteen species out of approximately 200 worldwide, occur in North America. Small trees or shrubs with twigs sometimes angled and/or winged. Leaves are opposite. Flowers are small, axillary with spreading petals. When ripe the, the fuschia-coloured fruit capsules plit and reveal arillate orange seeds, each borne at the end of a funicular attachment The fruits and seeds are attractive but highly poisonous.

Euonymus europaeus L.

European Spindle-tree; fusain d'Europe



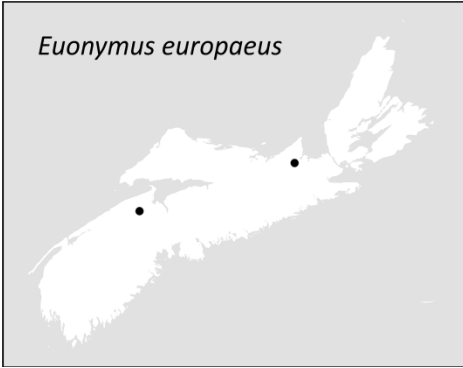
Photo by Sean Blaney

Shrub is generally less than 6 m with angled twigs, which are not winged. Leaves are glabrous below. Flowers are green and fruit has an orange aril. Potentially invasive.

Flowers in June.

Recently reported from old fields and shrub thickets in

Euonymus europaeus



Antigonish and from the edge of the Tupper Brook Trail in Coldbrook, Kings Co.

Ranges from ON, QC and NS south to KY and VA. A European introduction.