**Persicaria perfoliata (L.) H. Gross**

(*=Polygonum perfoliatum*) commonly known as mile-a-minute weed is an aggressive annual vine that invades forest edges, light gaps, open fields, and riparian borders in eastern North America. Native to Asia it was accidentally introduced into Pennsylvania (reportedly as a seed contaminant of holly seed sent from Japan to a nursery) in the 1930s and has since expanded its range north to Massachusetts, south to North Carolina, and west to Ohio. Since its introduction mile-a-minute has expanded in several directions for approximately 300 miles.

*P. perfoliata* has characteristic triangular leaves, flared bracts surrounding the stem and small backward projecting spines. Isolated plants are reported to produce thousands of seeds that remain in the soil for up to 6 years. Seeds germinate under the previous year’s growth and seedling densities of up to 200-500 per 0.5 sq meters have been recorded in its introduced range.

*P. perfoliata* grows rapidly forming dense spiny thickets in forest edges and open areas, smothering native vegetation and inhibiting reforestation and seedling generation.

*P. perfoliata* is difficult to control. It has a persistent seed bank that needs to be considered when planning management action. Hand pulling of seedlings is best done before the recurved barbs on the stem and leaves harden but may be done afterwards with the help of thick gloves. Studies have shown that pre-emergence applications of herbicide are most effective in controlling mile-a-minute weed, with the herbicides Oust, Velpar L, Arsenal, Aatrex, Pursuit and Pursuit Plus being the most effective. Roundup and Arsenal are best for post-emergence control. A biological control program was initiated in 1996, and in 2004, with the release of *Rhinoncomimus latipes*, a host-specific weevil initially collected in China. Weevils have been released in ten states through 2010, and populations have increased considerably at many sites.

**References:**


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