

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Celastrus orbiculatus*

FAMILY: *Celastraceae*

ORIGIN: Eastern Asia

US INTRODUCTION: Introduced in the 1860's as an ornamental garden plant

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

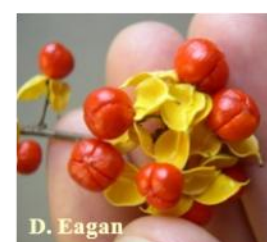
- Distribution and use for ornamental gardens
- Craft use (dried vines and fruits)
- Birds

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Perennial, woody, climbing vine, flowers from May to June, fruits in fall with separate male and female plants, spreads by seed and vegetatively
- Leaves alternate, dark green, serrated
- Fruits, greenish-yellow to dull-yellow when ripe, produced along the branches
- Seeds are surrounded by a bright red fleshy coating, which splits open to expose the seed
- Threatens most upland community types and well-drained floodplain and riparian corridors, grows in open and shaded areas



Vine, leaves and fruit covered by seed coat



Fruit



Yellow seed coat and red fruit



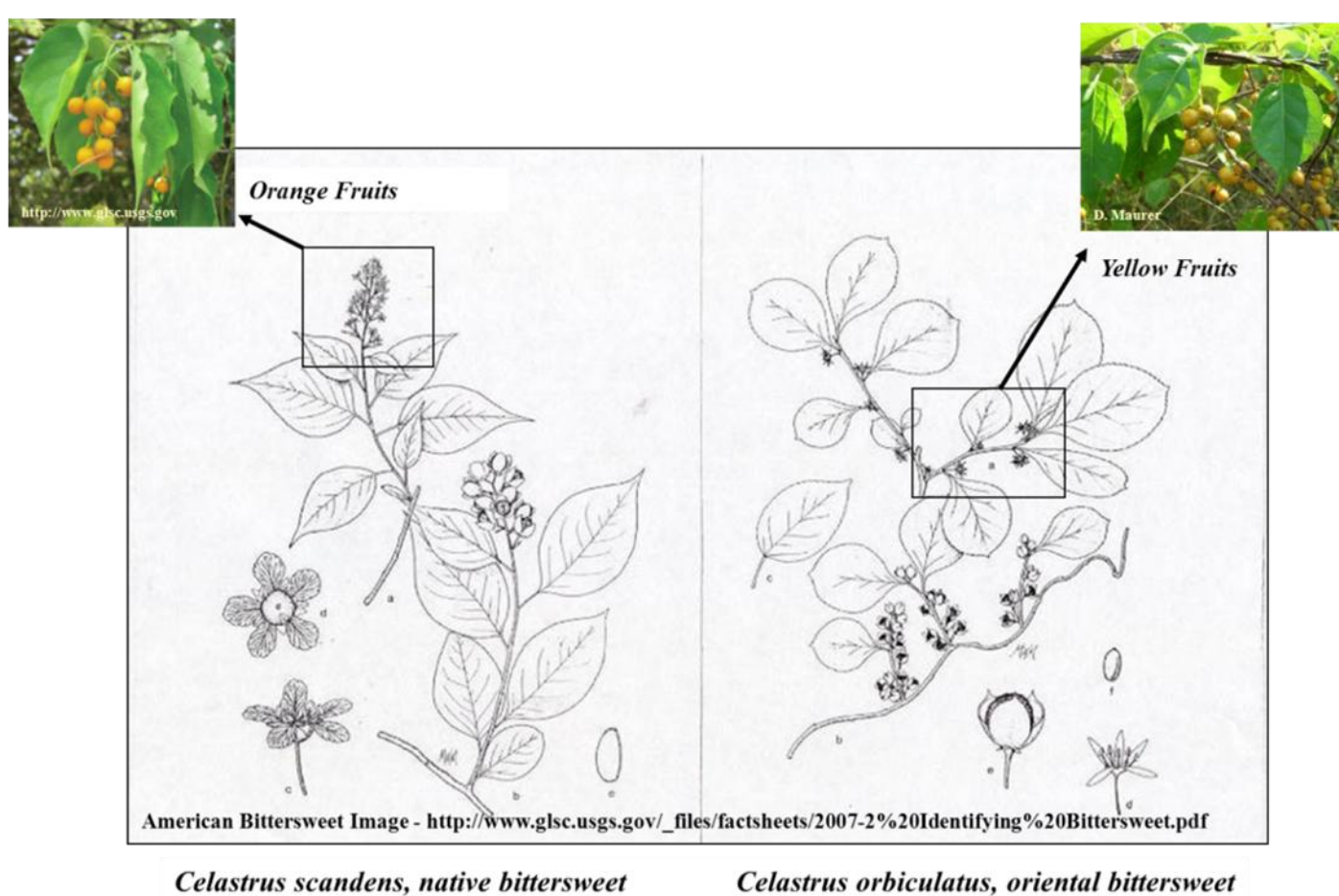
Mature vine



Flowers along branch

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

American bittersweet (*C. scandens*), grows >3 fruits terminally, on the ends of the branches. Leaves about twice as long as wide (easily confused with *C. orbiculatus*). Oriental bittersweet is reported to hybridize with American bittersweet.



Celastrus scandens, native bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus, oriental bittersweet

Native vs. Non-native

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

USDA Invasive Species Information Center.
<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/bittersweet.shtml>

Oriental Bittersweet Fact Sheet – Plant Conservation Alliance.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/ceor1.htm>

Oriental Bitter Sweet Images - U-GA Bugwood Image Gallery.
<http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=3012>

Oriental Bittersweet Profile - USDA Plants Database.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CEOR7>