



Invasive Species

Leaflet

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A publication of N.C. Department of Transportation



No. 03 March 2010

Rosa multiflora (Multiflora Rose)

Initial Introduction and Expansion in Range

Native to Japan, Korea and China, *Rosa multiflora* was introduced to the United States in the 1860s as rootstock for ornamental roses. In the 1930s, the Soil Conservation Service (renamed the Natural Resource Conservation Service in 1994) promoted this plant for erosion control and living fences for containing livestock. Various conservation organizations have also promoted its use for wildlife cover and food. In some states, *R. multiflora* was planted within highway medians as a crash barrier and as a means to reduce headlight glare from oncoming vehicles. It is now found throughout North Carolina.

Rosa multiflora reproduces by rooting at the tips of its arching branches and by seed. In a good year, an average size *R. multiflora* shrub can produce 500,000 to 1,000,000 seeds. This plant has become a serious threat to natural areas not only because its seeds are widely dispersed by birds, but because of its ability to grow in diverse light, soil and moisture conditions.



Description and Biology

- Medium-sized, deciduous, thorny shrub up to 10 feet in height.
- Stems distinctly arching in form.
- Compound leaves composed of 5 to 11 leaflets alternately arranged along the stem with a terminal leaflet. Each leaflet broadly oval with a serrate (toothed) margin. A feathery stipule (green, leaf-like structure) is found at the base of each leaf.
- Clusters of fragrant, white to pinkish-white, 5-petaled flowers bloom in May or June.
- Small red fruits called "rose hips" develop during the summer and can persist on the plant through winter.
- Distinguished from other native species of roses by arching stems and feathery stipule.

Habitats Susceptible to Invasion

Rosa multiflora forms dense impenetrable thickets that can choke out native understory species. Roadsides, pastures, wetlands (i.e. mountain bogs) and other non-forested areas are particularly susceptible to invasion. Disturbed right of ways provide the ideal conditions for the spread of this plant.

Prevention and Control

Cutting or mowing *R. multiflora* at least once during the growing season will control but not eradicate this plant. Small plants can be dug out by hand. Large plants can be pulled from the ground by tractors or trucks using strong ropes or chains.

Rosa multiflora can be effectively controlled from spring through fall with a foliar solution of 2 percent glyphosate or triclopyr plus a 0.5 percent non-ionic surfactant that thoroughly wets the leaves. The most successful chemical control can be achieved with a foliar solution of 1 ounce Metsulfuron per 100 gallons water, plus a 0.5 percent non-ionic surfactant. This solution will treat an area approximately the size of an acre.

If foliar spraying is not an option because of proximity to sensitive areas, *R. multiflora* can be effectively controlled with the cut stump method any time of year as long as the ground is not frozen. Once the plant is cut to the ground, immediately apply a 25 percent solution of triclopyr to the stumps taking care to cover the entire surface. All treatments should be followed up the next year to monitor and control sprouts

THE LABEL IS THE LAW! WHEN USING ANY PESTICIDE, FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

Citations:

Smith, Cherri. 2008. Invasive Exotic Plants of North Carolina. N.C. Department of Transportation. Raleigh, NC.

Rosa multiflora photography by Mike Kunz, NC Botanical Garden (left) and James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org (right).

This publication printed in cooperation between the NC Dept. of Transportation, and North Carolina Forest Service, with funding from the USDA Forest Service.

6000 of this document were printed at a cost of \$812.58 or 0.136 per copy.

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