

Invasive Plant species in Chester, CT

Common Name: Mile-A-Minute, Devil's Tail, Asiatic tearthumb

Scientific Name: *Persicaria perfoliata*

Origin: East Asia

General Information: Mile-a-minute was introduced to the US in the 1930s unintentionally. As its name implies it can spread rapidly! This vine can grow six inches a day and can reach over 25 feet in height during the growing season. Its seeds can be viable for five years in soil and are easily spread by animals or sometimes water. Local specimens can be found on Bokum Road in Chester.

Threats: This aggressive vine can smother and topple native plants and trees. Its early germination and rapid growth rate can easily overpower natives. Mile-a-minute is usually seen along stream banks, roadsides and rights-of-way, but it will also invade orchards and natural forests. Recreational and wildlife uses can be greatly impacted because of the thorny nature of the vine and the dense mat it can create.

Identification: Mile-a-minute has distinctive triangle-shaped leaves. The vine has small barbs that can also be present on the leaf petioles (leaf stems). The fruits are a stunning green to blue. Additionally, mile-a-minute has saucer shaped leaves at nodes and leaf branches.



Photo 1: Barbed mile-a-minute vine with triangular leaves and berries (Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut).



Photo 2: Saucer-shaped leaves at nodules and barbs on leaf stems (Lisa Hayward, Chester Conservation Commission).

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This very rapidly growing annual vine can grow more than 25 feet. It forms very dense, tangled mats, growing over shrubs, small trees and up the sides of forest edges



Photo 3: Mile-a-minute vine infestation (Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut).

Control: Small populations can be limited by hand pulling or mowing. Hand pulling is most effective in the early stages of the plant's growth. Regrowth in subsequent years is due to seeds and not the existence of the roots. If mowing is an option it is best done May to June. Be sure to clean the mower after each contact with mile-a-minute. Large established populations of mile-a-minute are best managed by using a specialist weevil or a specialized herbicide.

References: <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/fnr/fnr-481-w.pdf>;
<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/mile-minute-weed#cit>;
<https://mam.uconn.edu/species-identification/#>.