



# TORONTO MASTER GARDENER

# INVASIVE PLANTS FACT SHEETS

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## PRIVET

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SUPPORTED BY  
THE INVASIVE SPECIES CENTRE





## WHY IS PRIVET A PROBLEM

Privet outcompetes and displaces native vegetation. It can shade out and exclude native understory species and reduce tree recruitment. It is adaptable to light conditions and soil types and reproduces both sexually (fruit) and asexually (root sprouts). Fruit production is prolific and fruit produced by privet may be eaten by birds and wildlife and dispersed wide distances resulting in this invasive plant spreading to ravines and natural areas from gardens some distance away. Through the production of root sprouts and locally dispersed seed, it can quickly form thickets if left uncontrolled, outcompeting native populations.

# COMMON PRIVET

*(Ligustrum vulgare)*

## WHAT IS PRIVET

All privets are invasive. Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) and Japanese privet (*Ligustrum japonicum*) have the most severe impacts, but common privet is the species most readily available in Ontario. Privet is a shrub, native to Europe, northern Africa, and Asia Minor. It grows in sandy, loamy, and clay soils. It is tolerant of a wide range of conditions from drought to maritime exposure. It has no serious insect or disease susceptibility.

## IDENTIFICATION

**Leaves** are opposite, whorled, simple lanceolate, 2.5-6 cm long, dark green





## MANAGEMENT

Do not plant privet. Most effective management is to dig the plants out when they are small. Mechanical control of larger plants is difficult as the entire root system must be eradicated to prevent re-sprouting. Repeated cutting, every month, will stunt the plant and prevent berry production. With persistent monitoring, cutting the stems may prevent photosynthesis and deplete carbohydrate reserves of the shrub. Dispose of non-reproductive plant parts with yard waste. Reproductive plant parts should be placed in the garbage.

**If you see privet** or other invasive species in the wild, please contact the Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or visit [EDDMapS Ontario](#) to report a sighting.

**Bark** is smooth and brown-gray

**Flowers** are, white, small and tubular flowers in panicles up to 8 cm long, 4 petals

**Fruit** is a glossy drupe, dark purple or blackish in colour and may persist into winter.

**Height** 3 - 4.5 m, **spread** 2.5-4.5 m

## SIMILAR NATIVE PLANTS AND ALTERNATIVES

There are many alternative native plants that can fill a similar function to privet including:



### CHOKEBERRY

*(Aronia melanocarpa)*



### EASTERN WHITE CEDAR

*(Thuja occidentalis)*



### AMERICAN HORNBEAM

*(Carpinus caroliniana)*

## REFERENCES

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## PHOTO CREDIT

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