
SUNNYSIDE THYMES

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“Helping Others Grow”

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Wicked Weeds

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Rosa Multiflora, commonly known as multiflora rose, baby rose, Japanese rose, many-flowered rose, seven sisters rose, and ejitsu. It is native to eastern Asia, China, Japan, and Korea and was originally introduced into the eastern United States from Japan in 1866 as rootstock for ornamental roses and later in the 1930's as a soil conservation measure and used as a natural hedge to border grazing land, food for birds (fruit), and to attract wildlife. In some cases today it is grown as an ornamental plant, rootstock for other rose cultivars, and culinary use as the hips (fruits), leaves, and flowers are edible. It's scientific classification: Kingdom: Plantae; Order: Rosales; Family: Rosaceae; Genus: Rosa; Species: Rose Multiflora; Binomial name: Rosa Multiflora; and Common name: Multiflora Rose. Roses are one of the most popular plants with history as a cultivated plant going back 5,000+ years.

Multiflora Rose is a non-native invasive species (in North America) which is extremely prolific, in many states it's classified as a noxious weed (however, it's considered excellent fodder for goats), it can form dense thickets, excluding native plants, destroying pastures, creating a major nuisance in your landscape, woodland edges, fence rows, hedges, roadsides, fields, and margins of swamps and marshes. It is one of those major nuisance plants which



Photo: Lee Eastland, SMG

can cause major economic loss, flat tires, and serious discomfort to those who come in contact with its thorns.

It is a climbing shrub which can aggressively spread by rooting of the canes touching the soil or it's seed

(which can survive twenty years or more in the soil) is often spread by birds, and can show up anywhere (pasture, garden, flower bed, landscaping, woodland, or field) and typically grows 10 feet 20 feet tall and can have clumps several feet wide. Multiflora Rose leaves are 2 inches to 4 inches long, compound, with 5 to 9 leaflets, the flowers which are very fragrant (3/4 inch to 2 inches in diameter) are usually white but can be pink and are borne in late spring/early summer. It is distinguished from the American native roses by its large inflorescences which have multiple flowers often exceeding a dozen compared to the American species which have only one or a few at most.

The removal of multiflora rose requires an aggressive approach with continuing removal or treatment. Pruning, cutting back, or digging up the plant usually will not kill it; to eliminate the plant by digging up the plant all the roots and seeds must also be removed. The natural biological controls include the rose rosette disease and the rose seed chalcid (*Megastigmus aculeatus* var. *nigroflavus*), however the rose rosette disease can spread to other beneficial plants and rose seed chalcid effectiveness is still under research. From my experience; the use of herbicides is most effective, however you can kill everything the spray comes in contact with. If you decide to use herbicide, always read and follow the label directions. Both glyphosate and picloram (Tordon RTU) are recommended for controlling multiflora rose by the selective method of applying the concentrated herbicide



Photo: Penn State Extension, <https://>

to the cut multiflora rose stump with a sponge type applicator (foam paint brush works good). With this method the herbicide is applied directly to the target plant stump after cutting the plant off, and reducing the possibilities of damaging desirable vegetation in the area. If a foliar spray treatment is used, Fosamine (trade name Krenite), Dicamba (trade name Banvel), or Glyphosate (trade name Roundup) are recommended. If dormant treatments are used; a spot application of a concentration of Banvel or Crossbow can be effective, applying the chemical to the lower area of the canes. The applicator should read and follow the label with using the best product and application for the situation as it is easy to kill the desirable plants in area as well.

Sources:

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“Managing Multiflora Rose” Penn State University

“Multiflora Rose Invasive Plant Control” Natural Resources Conservation Service

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/rosa-multiflora>

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Missouri Department of Conservation “Multiflora Rose Control”