

Berberis vulgaris

Invasive to Maine

Common Barberry
European Barberry

Upland
Forests, Fields, and Developed Areas

Leaves



VS user FBlock3, Waynflete Middle School



Look for leaves with toothed edges and a scaly surface. Look for leaves that are 2-4 cm long and in small clusters.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 PALMATE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ROUND	 WAVY

Plant



Flickr user Arthur Chapman



Look for a dense shrub that is up to 2-3 m tall and 1-2 m wide.

Stem



VS user FBlock3, Waynflete Middle School



Look for woody thorns that are 1-1.5 cm long. There can be up to three thorns per leaf cluster. Look for a white pith inside of the stem.

Seasonal Change



VS user Waynflete2, Waynflete MS / Les Mehroff



Look for small, pale yellow flowers in late spring and then look for 2-3 cm long, red or purple berries in summer. The flowers grow in bunches.

Similar Species

Common barberry is similar to Japanese barberry. The leaves on the Japanese variety are rounded, not toothed. Japanese barberry has smaller thorns, white flowers, and hard berries (while the common barberry has fleshy, juicy berries).

Did You Know?

Barberry was originally cultivated for its fruit, which was pickled and used to garnish dishes. Ripe berries can be made into a jelly. It is also an alternate host for wheat rust, a devastating disease that afflicts wheat but has no effect on barberry.