

Ilex verticillata

American winterberry
Black alder winterberry

Native to Maine

Upland
Forests, Fields, and Developed Areas













Leaves



Steven J. Baskauf, <http://bioimages.vanderbilt.edu>

PERMITTED USE

Look for oval leaves that have serrated (toothed) edges. Leaves are alternately arranged on the stem and 3 to 9 cm long. Winterberry is deciduous losing its leaves for winter.

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



The Dow Gardens Archive, Dow Gardens, Bugwood.org

PERMITTED USE

Look for an upright shrub growing up to 5 m tall with thin multi-stemmed branches. This species is a holly but looks very different from evergreen holly plants.

Stem



Steven J. Baskauf, <http://bioimages.vanderbilt.edu>

PERMITTED USE

Look for bark that's smooth and gray to reddish-brown with knobby lenticels (pores). Berries remain on the stems well into winter.

Seasonal Change



Richard Webb, horticulturist, bugwood.org

PERMITTED USE

In fall and winter, winterberry loses its leaves. Look for bright red, round berries in tight clumps along the branches.

Similar Species

A great way to distinguish this species from the invasive Oriental Bittersweet is to look at the leaf margins and berries. Winterberry has serrated leaf edges and smooth red berries. Oriental Bittersweet has rounder leaves and red berries with loose yellow skins.

Fun Fact

The bark and berries of the winterberry have been used by Native Americans for medicinal purposes. There are female and male varieties of this plant that must be present for a plant to produce berries.