

Chinese/European/Border/California Privets



Chinese (*Ligustrum sinense* Lour.), European (*L. vulgare* L.), border (*L. obtusifolium* Siebold & Zucc.), and California privets (*L. ovalifolium* Hassk.) are shrubs with thin opposite leaves, semievergreen to evergreen, and thicket forming to 30 feet (9 m) in height. All have multiple leaning-to-arching stems with long leafy branches. Chinese privet is one of the most widely spread invasive plants in the South, while the other three are uncommon. All have showy clusters of small white flowers in spring that yield abundant clusters of small ovoid, dark purple berries during fall and winter. Aggressive and troublesome invasives, often forming dense thickets, particularly in bottomland forests and along fencerows. Shade tolerant. Colonize by root sprouts and spread widely by abundant bird- and animal-dispersed seeds. Seeds thought to be viable for only 1 year. Many shallow surface roots that sprout when parent tree is topkilled. Still being produced, sold, and planted as ornamentals.

Management strategies:

- Do not plant. Remove prior plantings, and control sprouts and seedlings. Bag and dispose of fruit in a dumpster or burn.
- Minimize disturbance within miles of where these plants occur, and anticipate wider occupation if plants are present before disturbance.
- Treat when new plants are young to prevent seed formation.
- Cut and bulldoze when fruit are not present.
- Manually pull new seedlings and tree wrench saplings when soil is moist, ensuring removal of all roots.
- Burns hot when green to topkill small to medium-sized stems.
- Readily eaten by goats, sheep, and deer when reachable.

Recommended control procedures:

- Thoroughly wet all leaves with one of the following herbicides in water with a surfactant: a glyphosate herbicide as a 3-percent solution (12 ounces per 3-gallon mix) when safety to surrounding vegetation is desired, or elsewhere, Arsenal AC* as a 1-percent solution (4 ounces per 3-gallon mix). Backpack mist blowers can broadcast glyphosate as a 3-percent solution (12 ounces per 3-gallon mix) or Escort XP* at 1 ounce per acre (0.2 dry ounces per 3-gallon mix and 10 gallons per acre) during winter for safety to dormant hardwoods. Summer applications of glyphosate may not be as effective as other times and require a higher percent solution. The best time period for Arsenal AC* and Escort XP* is summer to fall.
- For stems too tall for foliar sprays and when safety to surrounding vegetation is desired, apply a basal spray of Garlon 4 as a 20-percent solution (5 pints per 3-gallon mix) in a labeled basal oil product, vegetable oil or mineral oil with a penetrant, or fuel oil or diesel fuel (where permitted); or undiluted Pathfinder II. Elsewhere, apply Stalker* as a 6- to 9-percent solution (1.5 to 2 pints per 3-gallon mix) in a labeled basal oil product, vegetable oil or mineral oil with a penetrant, or fuel oil or diesel fuel (where permitted) to young bark as a basal spray making certain to treat all stems in a clump; or cut and immediately treat the stump tops with Arsenal AC* as a 5-percent solution (20 ounces per 3-gallon mix) or Velpar L* as a 10-percent solution in water (1 quart per 3-gallon mix) with a surfactant. When safety to surrounding vegetation is desired, immediately treat stump tops and sides with Garlon 3A or with a glyphosate herbicide as a 20-percent solution (5 pints per 3-gallon mix) in water with a surfactant. ORTHO Brush-B-Gon, Enforcer Brush Killer, and Vine-X are effective undiluted for treating cut-stumps and available in retail garden stores (safe to surrounding plants).
- For large stems, make stem injections using Arsenal AC* or when safety to surrounding vegetation is desired, Garlon 3A or a glyphosate herbicide using dilutions and cut-spacings specified on the herbicide label (anytime except March and April). An EZ-Ject tree injector can help to reach the lower part of the main stem; otherwise, every branching trunk must be hack-and-squirt injected.

* Nontarget plants may be killed or injured by root uptake.