

Leatherleaf Mahonia



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Leatherleaf mahonia or Beale's barberry [*Mahonia bealei* (Fortune) Carrière] is an evergreen shrub, erect and gangly or multistemmed, that grows up to 10 feet (3 m) in height, and branching to 4 to 8 feet (1.2 to 2.4 m) wide from a pronounced root crown (with shallow roots) having yellow centers when cut. Leathery, odd-pinnately compound leaves radiate outward on long stalks with spiny, hollylike leaflets. Terminal, radiating stems of fragrant yellow flowers appear in late winter to spring and yield abundant pale blue fruit in summer that mature to bluish black. Fruits are covered by whitish wax during winter. Species spreads by many bird-dispersed seeds from ornamental plantings and colonizes by basal sprouts. Seed from ripe fruit can immediately germinate. Still widely planted as an ornamental.

Management strategies:

- Do not plant. Remove prior plantings, and control sprouts and seedlings. Bag and dispose of fruit in a dumpster or burn.
- Treat when new plants are young to prevent seed formation.
- Manual pulling is hindered by spiny leaflets.
- Manually pull new seedlings and tree wrench saplings when soil is moist, ensuring removal of all roots.

Recommended control procedures:

- For stems too tall for foliar sprays, cut stems and immediately treat the stump tops with one of the following herbicides: Garlon 4, Garlon 3A, or a glyphosate herbicide as a 25-percent solution (3 quarts per 3-gallon mix). 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).
- Thoroughly wet all leaves with one of the following herbicides in water with a surfactant: a glyphosate herbicide or Garlon 3A as a 5-percent solution (20 ounces per 3-gallon mix) during the growing season above 70 °F (21 °C). When nontarget damage is not a concern, use one of the following herbicides: Arsenal AC* as a 0.12-percent solution (0.5 ounce per 3-gallon mix) or Arsenal PowerLine* as a 0.25-percent solution (1 ounce per 3-gallon mix) plus a glyphosate herbicide as a 2-percent solution (8 ounces per 3-gallon mix) plus Escort XP* at 0.4 dry ounce per 3-gallon mix in water. Spray as a low-volume application to lightly wet leaves.

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