Michigan Invasive Plant Council

Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System (MPIAS June 2008)

Vinca minor, Periwinkle

Summary and Recommendations for Michigan: Vinca minor, Periwinkle was introduced from Europe in the 1700's as an ornamental ground cover commonly sold and planted by gardeners. European settlers valued periwinkle for its medicinal qualities and planted it around their homesteads and cabins. It was also used as a grave site adornment. Periwinkle is a comparatively slow spreader that spreads only about 12 inches per year under favorable conditions. It does this by stolons that root as they spread. It can produce seeds. Seeds are heavy and do not germinate readily. It is found around old homesites and persists as a living relic of passed cultivation. It has also been introduced into natural areas by the careless dumping of yard waste.

Invasiveness in Michigan: Vinca minor, Periwinkle's potential invasiveness is considered insignificant due to its reproductive ability and dispersal. Its invasiveness rank is consistently insignificant across natural and managed systems and in Upper and Lower Peninsula ecological regions. However consult below for its responsible use. For more information consult the complete MPIAS assessment.

Value in Michigan: Recognized value is found in horticulture production, managed landscape systems and erosion control.

Responsible Use: Periwinkle is a low maintenance ground cover and shade tolerate substitute for turf. Its dense carpet is valuable in minimizing weed control efforts. One may safely/responsibly use periwinkle as a garden plant if planted in parts of the landscape that do not border natural areas. Do not dump plants or their parts in natural areas

Early detection rapid/response: Vinca minor, Periwinkle is easily identified by its evergreen ground cover, glossy dark green leaves, and spring borne lavender flowers. Consult printed or on-line resources for pictorial descriptors of the plant.

Long term control/management: Periwinkle can be removed by digging, mowing the plants, cutting the plants in spring. It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides. It may take a few successive sprays for complete eradication. Another option is to allow nurseries or other plant brokers to harvest it. Chemical applications should be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's label.

Restoration: A natural area may require restoration following removal of Vinca minor due to the risk of facilitating invasion by other undesirable plant species. In such case, a competent restoration ecologist should be consulted for appropriate species and planting procedures.

For complete information from the Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System

Consult: http://invasiveplantsmi.org