

## **ORIENTAL BITTERSWEET: UNDERSTANDING ITS ECOLOGY AND PLANNING ITS CONTROL**

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Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is a woody, twining vine introduced from Asia in the 1860s. It has been widely dispersed by birds, mammals, nurseries and the ornamental wreath trade. It is now common in much of the Northeast and poses a serious, long-term threat to silviculture in the region. Once established, Oriental bittersweet can quickly overtop trees along roads, in clearings and in forest gaps. Dense invasions can effectively halt forest succession and the vines can spread from treetop to treetop, creating dangerous felling conditions. Because of its ability to survive in the shade for several years and then grow rapidly after overstory removal, foresters should learn to recognize and control Oriental bittersweet in the understory before timber is harvested. This talk will focus on the suite of ecological traits that should be considered when monitoring for bittersweet and planning its control. Preferred control methods will also be discussed.