

# WEED ALERT

## Mile-a-Minute Vine *Persicaria perfoliata*

**Mile-a-minute weed (MAM)** is a fast-growing annual vine.

This plant is native to Asia, and grows up to 6 inches per day. It can easily overgrow and outcompete native plants on roadsides, stream banks, fields and forest edges.



MAM prefers low, wet land in full sun. The stems are covered with short curved spines that give the plant another nickname, “tearthumb.”



Mile-a-minute vine has now been found in seven counties in North Carolina, including Alleghany, Gates, Guilford, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Rockingham and Watauga.

Identification of mile-a-minute vine

# Biological Control of

**A**lthough over 35 species of insects have been documented to feed on MAM in North America, they do not cause enough damage to keep the weed below damaging levels. A collaborative project between scientists with the USDA-Forest Service, the University of Delaware and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, screened insects found feeding on MAM and selected a weevil *Rhinoncomimus latipes*. This weevil feeds only on mile-a-minute vine, and does not harm other plants, people, or livestock. The MAM weevil is now being reared by the NJ Department of Agriculture. Specialists with the NCDA&CS Biological Control Program began making releases of the weevil in Spring 2011. The weevils were released in designated plots in the infested area. The plots have been monitored to evaluate the establishment and spread of the weevils and some populations are now considered to be established



# Mile-A-Minute Vine



after surviving for 3 years.

**T**he weevils are small, about 2mm (1/8th in) long and black (1). As they feed they develop an orange film (2). Adults feed on the foliage, leaving a shot-hole appearance (3).

**F**emales lay eggs on leaves, stems, and terminals. Larvae (4) bore into the stems where they feed and develop. Feeding results in plant defoliation, reduced vine cover and a decrease in seed production. When mature, larvae drop to the soil to pupate. Development time from egg to adult is about 26 days, and they may have 3-4 generations each season. Each female can lay about 130 eggs (in tests they averaged 130 -180). Adults overwinter under vines and can live up to a year. Weevils have been shown to move over a mile per year from the release site and they are able to locate small isolated patches of MAM as well as large infestations.

**F**or information about the release of weevils, contact Kathy Kidd, Biological Control Administrator at (919) 233-8214 or [Kathleen.kidd@ncagr.gov](mailto:Kathleen.kidd@ncagr.gov).

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## Mile-a-minute vine has several distinct features:

- Triangular leaves (1)
- Rounded ocreae (small leaves) at the nodes (2)
- Short curved spines along the stems (3)



Flowers are small, white and inconspicuous. During the summer, metallic blue berry-like fruit (4) develop in clusters. Fruit are segmented and each segment bears a single seed. MAM is spread by water, animals and as a contaminant of nursery stock. The fruits are buoyant for 7-9 days and can move great distances in flowing water.



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**If you have seen this weed with all of its identifying characteristics, contact Weed Specialist Bridget Lassiter at (919) 707-3749.**

**Or contact the NCDA&CS Invasive Species Hotline at: 1-800-206-9333 or report by email: [newpest@ncagr.gov](mailto:newpest@ncagr.gov).**



**North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Steve Troxler, Commissioner**