

DEDHAM'S LEAST WANTED!

Multiflora Rose, *Rosa multiflora*



Flowers begin in May or June.



Note fringed stipules at base of stem.

Origin: Multiflora rose was introduced to the East Coast from Japan in 1866 as rootstock for ornamental roses. Beginning in the 1930s, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service promoted it for use in erosion control and as "living fences" to confine livestock. It was also used as "crash barriers" by highway departments across the country.

Identification / Habitat: Multiflora rose is a thorny, perennial shrub with arching stems (canes), and leaves divided into five to eleven sharply toothed leaflets. The base of each leaf stalk bears a pair of fringed stipules (see photo). Beginning in May or June, clusters of showy, fragrant, white to pink flowers appear, each about an inch across. Small bright red fruit known as hips develop during the summer, becoming leathery, and remain on the plant through the winter.

Dispersal: Multiflora rose reproduces by seed and by forming new plants that root from the tips of arching canes that contact the ground. Fruits are readily sought after by birds which are the primary dispersers of its seed. Germination of Multiflora rose seeds is enhanced by passing through the digestive tract of birds. It has been estimated that an average Multiflora rose plant may produce a million seeds per year, which may remain viable in the soil for up to twenty years.

Problems: Multiflora rose is extremely prolific and can form impenetrable thickets that exclude native plant species. This exotic rose readily invades open woodlands, forest edges, successional fields, and meadows that have been subjected to land disturbance.

Control: Multiflora rose is most effectively controlled by recognizing its appearance early and removing isolated plants before they begin to produce seed. Hand pulling is effective in small infestations. Make sure to wear gloves and long sleeves as the plant is quite thorny. Remove the entire root section or re-sprouting will occur. Mowing six times per growing season for three to four years has proven effective.

Any removal within 100 feet of wetland resource areas, including certified vernal pools, or within 200 feet of a perennial stream will require approval from the Dedham Conservation Commission. Please contact the Conservation Department *before* you begin!