

Symplocos paniculata, Sapphireberry

Another new threat to the region, Sapphireberry was just found and identified last year by the Lower Hudson PRISM Strike Force in Pound Ridge. It has also been found in CT, and is very difficult to remove and has a very quick reproductive rate.

Population Status: Confirmed- Lower Hudson PRISM, CT.

Description: Sapphireberry clearly gets its name from the turquoise-blue berries that develop in late summer and autumn. These berries grow in clusters and start off whiteish, deepening in color as they ripen. It grows up to 40 feet tall but is usually smaller. They prefer acidic soil and have no sunlight preference. The leaves are alternate, leathery and come to a tip. Will produce more leaves per stem than most trees. The seeds are reported to not germinate easily, often waiting until the second year to sprout.

Control: Pull all seedlings possible, this plant has a deep taproot that requires two hands and sometimes two people to pull. Pull with the knees, not your back.

Look-alikes: Serviceberry (native), Photinia (Tier 1, see above)

Flower Time and Description: The flowers of this plant bloom in the late spring to the early summer. These flowers are about 1/3rd of an inch long and have five petals and thirty stamens. The clusters are terminal, as can be seen in the lower picture.

