

Solanum dulcamara

Invasive to Maine

Woody nightshade,
bittersweet nightshade

Upland
Forests, Fields, and Developed Areas

Leaves



VS user sniffly salamander



Look for dark green to purple leaves that alternate along a slender stem. Leaves are roughly arrow-shaped. Look for small ear-like lobes at the base of each leaf.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ARROW-SHAPED	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 SIMPLE	 BLADE	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 LANCE-SHAPED	 WAVY

Plant



Flickr user Mollivan Jon



Look for a vine or sprawling shrub that scrambles over other plants. With the right support, the vine can reach 4 m, but is usually 1-2 m tall.

Stem



VS user Pandion nightshade, Waynflete Lower School



Look for lower stems that are woody and slender upper stems that are herbaceous (flexible). Crushed stems have an unpleasant smell.

Seasonal Change



VS user nightshade2 / wikimediacommons, D.Gordon



From May-Aug, look for clusters of 3-20 purple, star-shaped flowers with 5 petals and a prominent yellow cone. In Aug-Octo, look for egg-shaped red berries.

Similar Species

Bittersweet nightshade can be confused with deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*). Deadly nightshade flowers and fruit are very different. Its berries are green and ripen to black. Its flowers are a dull brownish purple and do not have a prominent yellow cone.

Did You Know?

DO NOT EAT! All parts of bittersweet nightshade are poisonous to humans, pets, and livestock (poison = solanine). They are edible by birds. Birds eat and spread the berries (each tiny berry has about 30 seeds!).

Researched and created by S. Morrisseau

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.