

***Berberis julianae* Winterberry Barberry¹**

Edward F. Gilman, Ryan W. Klein, and Gail Hansen²

Introduction

Wintergreen barberry is ideal for use as an almost impenetrable hedge or barrier planting, with its dense branching growth habit, spiny leaves up to three inches long, and the three-parted spines located along the stiff stems. Plants reach six to eight feet in height with a spread of three to four feet. One of the hardiest evergreen barberries, the leaves of wintergreen barberry may turn a lovely wine-red or purplish bronze in the winter and are joined by the persistent blue-black berries. Clusters of small, lemon-yellow blooms appear in late spring for a week or two and may occasionally have an unpleasant fragrance. Fairly erect but more rounded with age, wintergreen barberry also works well in mixed shrubbery borders or as a foundation planting. Group three together in a shrubbery border for a nice, contrasting textural effect. Barberry makes a good barrier or hedge plant since a person will attempt to walk through it only once.



Figure 2. Full Form, Fall Color - *Berberis julianae*: Winterberry Barberry
Credits: undefined



Figure 3. Full Form, Manicured - *Berberis julianae*: Winterberry Barberry
Credits: undefined



Figure 1. Full Form - *Berberis julianae*: Winterberry Barberry
Credits: undefined

1. This document is FPS65, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date October 1999. Revised July 2022. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
2. Edward F. Gilman, professor; Ryan W. Klein; and Gail Hansen; Environmental Horticulture Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.



Figure 4. Leaf - *Berberis julianae*: Winterberry Barberry
Credits: undefined

General Information

Scientific name: *Berberis julianae*

Pronunciation: BUR-bur-issjool-ee-AN-ee

Common name(s): wintergreen barberry

Family: *Berberidaceae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 9A (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planating range.
Credits: undefined

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: native to temperate Asia

Invasive potential: not considered a problem species at this time and may be recommended by UF/IFAS faculty (reassess in 10 years)

Uses: hedge; border; screen

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Spread: 2 to 5 feet

Plant habit: vase shape; round; upright

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: spiny

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: fragrant

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: red

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: less than ½ inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: red

Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant; attracts birds

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems; thorns present

Current year stem/twig color: yellow

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; acidic; slightly alkaline; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Wintergreen barberry is fairly adaptable to a wide range of soil conditions but looks its best when grown on rich, somewhat moist soil in full sun or light shifting shade. Plants will require some pruning to maintain their best form. In time, the center of the plant becomes thick with dead and living stems massed together in a thicket. Remove the dead stems and thin the living stems to allow more light to reach the interior of the plant. Wear heavy gloves and a long-sleeved shirt when pruning barberry.

Cultivars include: 'Nana', three to four feet high, has very large spines and forms a solid mound of glossy dark green foliage which becomes wine-red in winter. Unfortunately,

'Nana' is difficult to find commercially. *Berberis gagnepainii*, black barberry, has flower and fruit similar to wintergreen barberry but is wider and has more pendulous branches.

Propagation is by semi-hardwood cuttings rooted under mist.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.