Invasive of the month (November)

Ligustrum Species



History & Current Presence: Privets (Ligustrum spp) are very pervasive plants that were first brought to the US for ornamental use, particularly as hedge shrubs used in landscaping for privacy. Their quick and dense growth pattern and semi-deciduous nature, which makes them well suited for use as a hedge, is also a large part of why these invasive species are such a prolific issue in our natural spaces. Raleigh has three types of privet including, Chinese privet (Ligustrum sinense), Japanese privet (Ligustrum japonicum), and Glossy privet (Ligustrum lucidum).

ID Guide & Description: Privet is most easily identified in the cooler months when most native species have dropped their leaves, as privet is semi-deciduous. All privets have dark green leaves that grow in an opposite pattern, meaning they will grow in pairs across from each other on along the stem. Chinese privet has significantly smaller leaves than Japanese or Glossy privet, as seen in the photo above. All privets can grow into large shrubs or midstory trees.

Fun Fact: You can tell the difference between Japanese and Glossy privet by looking for a shiny sheen on the top of the leaf and by holding the leaves up to the sunlight and checking for a translucent border around the edges.