

# Rare Plants of Louisiana

## *Celastrus scandens* - climbing bittersweet Bittersweet Family (Celastraceae)

**Rarity Rank:** S1/G5

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

**Range:** Eastern two-thirds of U.S. and Canada

### Recognition:

- A high-climbing or tangle-forming woody vine that climbs by twining; rhizomatous and thicket forming
- Leaves are alternate, deciduous, with membranous blades that are oval to lance-shaped, 5 to 10 cm long by 2 to 5 cm wide; leaf margins entire or serrate; leaf tips sharp-pointed
- Flowers greenish-white, small, about 5 mm across, with 5 petals, born in terminal panicles or racemes
- Fruit an orange capsule that splits upon drying, exposing scarlet arils and seeds; persistent and showy, therefore used for ornamental purposes



Thomas G. Barnes @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

**Flowering Time:** May to June; fruit ripening August to October

**Light Requirement:** Full sun to shade

### Wetland Indicator Status:

FACU – usually occurs in uplands, but occasionally in wetlands

### Habitat:

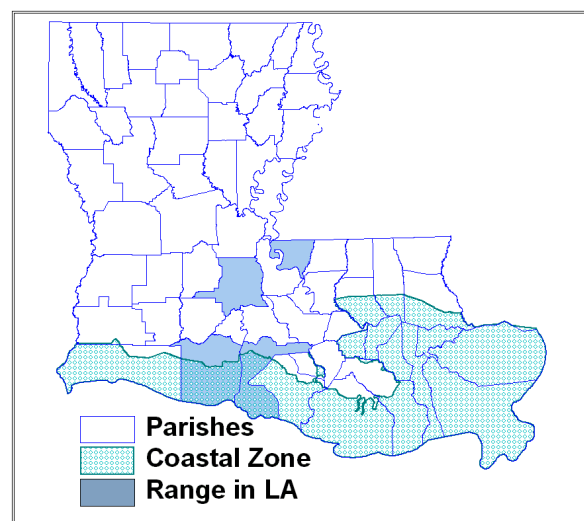
Rich, mesic soils of southern mesophytic forests (loess bluffs), salt dome hardwood forests, and high sites in bottomland hardwoods.

### Threats:

- Conversion of native forests to other forest types or agriculture
- Unnatural rates of erosion
- Lack of status information

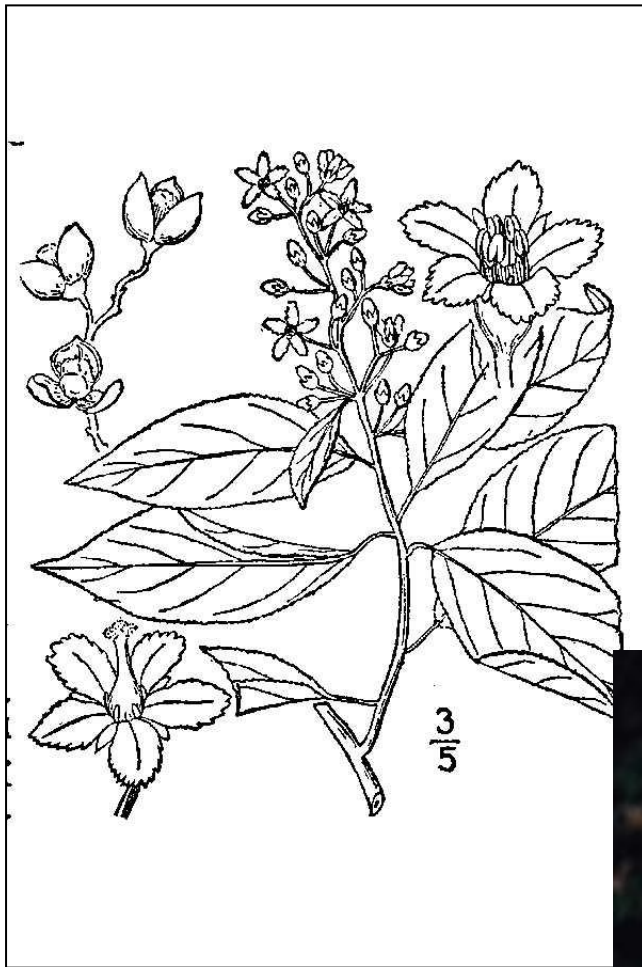
### Beneficial Management Practices:

- Manage remaining rich soil native forests in an ecologically sound manner
- Conduct more field surveys to update data on known occurrences and to detect additional populations



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LA River Basins: Mississippi, Vermilion-Teche



USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States, Canada and the British Possessions*. Vol. 2: 493.



**Top:** *C. scandens* foliage - courtesy University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW-Stevens Point

**Bottom:** *C. scandens* climbing by twining

## References:

Allen, C. M., D. A. Newman, and H. H. Winters. 2002. *Trees, shrubs and woody vines of Louisiana*. Allen's Native Ventures, LLC. Pitkin, LA. 333 pp.

USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

Vines, R.A. 1960. *Trees, shrubs and woody vines of the southwest: a guide for Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas*. The Blackburn Press. Caldwell, NJ. 1104 pp.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

[www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program](http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program) or 225-765-2811

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