

Weed Information Sheet:

Japanese pachysandra

Pachysandra terminalis

Identification:

Buxaceae (Box family)

Uncommon Perennial forb

Height: 6-12"

Width: ∞

Leaf Arrangement: alternate

Flower: White, Cream

Blooms: Mid-spring

Fruit: White berry

Fall Color: Green

Pachysandra is a perennial ground-cover. Leaves are thick and waxy, nearly succulent, and sprout of the stem in whorls. The foliage rarely gets more than 6" high. Flowering in mid-spring, the flower stalks can reach nearly a foot in height. Flowers themselves are creamy white, small tubular blossoms in short, vertical flower clusters. By mid-summer, white berry-like drupes form. Colonies of pachysandra can spread over very large areas, excluding other plant life.



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AKA: Japanese spurge



Description & Impact:

Pachysandra was introduced from East Asia as a landscaping plant. It has now become invasive across the Midwest and Eastern North America. While this species rarely spreads on its own out of contained garden beds, when it does escape into natural areas, it spreads persistently, creating a large monoculture that excludes nearly all other plant life. The weak root system does a poor job holding soil and can accelerate erosion on slopes and stream sides.

Control Methods:

Small patches can be removed by hand-digging out the rhizomatous roots.

Pachysandra can be killed by a number of herbicides, including glyphosate (Round-Up®, etc.), and the amine formulation of triclopyr (Garlon® 3A, Vastlan® etc.). Better leaf penetration could be achieved by adding a crop oil such as methylated soybean oil to the herbicide mix. Ideally, cut or mow the pachysandra first, allowing it to resprout, and then apply herbicide to the fresh regrowth.

Prescribed burns can also impact pachysandra, provided the fire is intense enough to burn through the green foliage.

Citations: <http://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/syllabus/factsheet.cfm?ID=531>