

# AlterNATIVES to Japanese Barberry!

*Berberis thunbergii*

## What is Japanese Barberry?

Japanese Barberry is a popular small landscape shrub available in a variety of cultivar colors. It has spoon-shaped leaves, needle-sharp thorns, and red oval berries.



## Why Shouldn't I Plant It?

While attractive, birds spread the seeds of Japanese Barberry from landscaped yards to natural areas. Like other invasive shrubs (honeysuckle, autumn olive), Barberry seeds grow into large and dense thickets, outcompeting native plants for space and light. They invade a variety of habitats, even heavily shaded woodlands. Barberry has also been associated with increased numbers of deer ticks and rates of Lyme disease, posing a public health concern.

## Why Should I Choose a Native Alternative?

Native plants are not only beautiful, they also benefit birds and other wildlife. Unlike non-native species, these plants support multiple pollinators and insects, providing food for Indiana birds. Also, if spread to nearby natural areas, natives plants don't harm existing ecosystems.

## For More Information

- Indiana Native Plant Society: [www.indiananativeplants.org](http://www.indiananativeplants.org)
- Indiana Invasive Species Council: [www.indianainvasivespecies.org](http://www.indianainvasivespecies.org)
- Local SWCDs: [iaswcd.org/contact-your-local-swcd/](http://iaswcd.org/contact-your-local-swcd/)
- **Additional native alternatives include:** Red or Black Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*, *A. arbutifolia*), Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*), Coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*), Native Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*), and Lead Plant (*Amorpha canescens*)

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Photos courtesy of: David Stang, RA Nonenmacher, Wikimedia Commons; Stephanie Brundage, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Leslie Mehrhoff, UCONN, Bugwood.org



## New Jersey Tea

(*Ceanothus americanus*)

- Naturally compact, dense, rounded shrub
- Low maintenance, best with good drainage but tolerates dry/rocky soil & black walnut
- Once used as substitute for tea leaves



## Shrubby St. John's Wort

(*Hypericum prolificum*)

- Naturally compact, rounded shrub 1-4' tall
- Low maintenance, tolerates drought, sandy or clay soils, black walnut, & deer/rabbits
- Attractive yellow flowers loved by bees



## Winterberry

(*Ilex verticillata*)

- Showy red berries give winter color, but need to plant male & female plants for pollination
- Tolerates poor drainage, clay soils, pollution
- For smaller shrub choose 'Red Sprite' cultivar



## Ninebark

(*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

- Tolerates a wide range of soil types & moisture
- Showy pink to white flowers
- Several cultivars available with purple or gold foliage, or shorter than the standard 4-6'

