

Russian-vine

Species Description

Scientific name: *Fallopia baldschuanica*
AKA: Clymog Rwsia (Welsh), *Polygonum aubertii*
Native to: Central Asia
Habitat: Trees, scrub, hedges and neglected buildings

A climbing perennial scrambling for many metres over other vegetation and structures, such as trees, fencing and buildings. Its vine-like stems grow to be thick and woody at the base becoming thinner and twining further up the plant. The woody stem and clusters of small white flowers readily distinguish this creeper from others found in the wild in the UK.

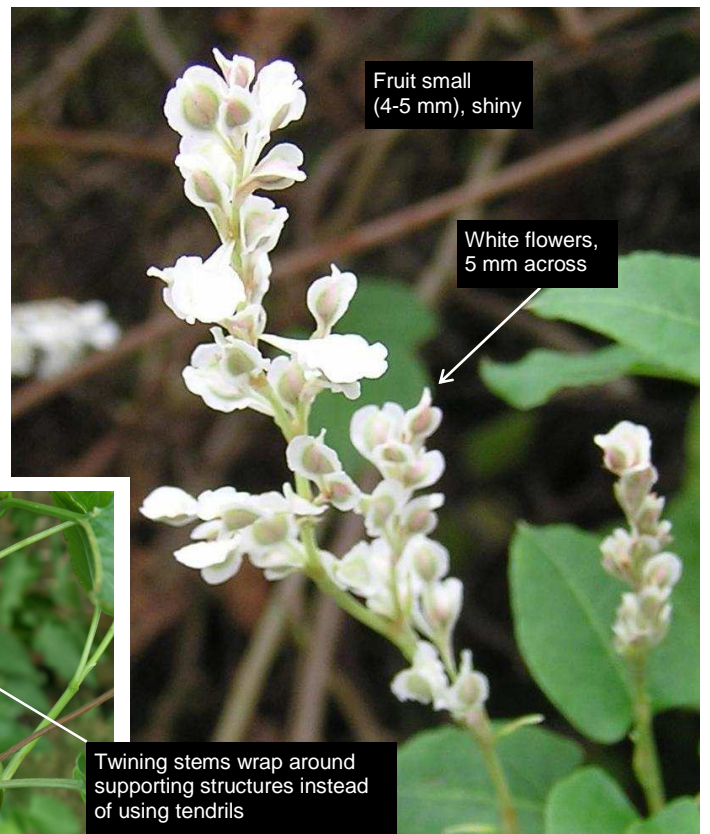
Introduced into gardens in the UK towards the end of the 19th Century. It was first recorded in the wild in 1936 and is increasing due to its continued use in gardens and for landscaping, e.g. screening, and from the discarding of surplus garden material onto roadsides and rubbish tips. It is rarely naturalised away from habitation.

This plant is very fast growing and can spread quickly. It can cover native trees and shrubs and reduce biodiversity by shading out other species.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Russian-vine is easiest to identify when it is flowering, between July and October. Its woody lower stem distinguishes it at all times of the year from all other climbing species with the exception of Traveller's-joy (*Clematis vitalba*), the stem of which is also woody but more rope-like and the fruits

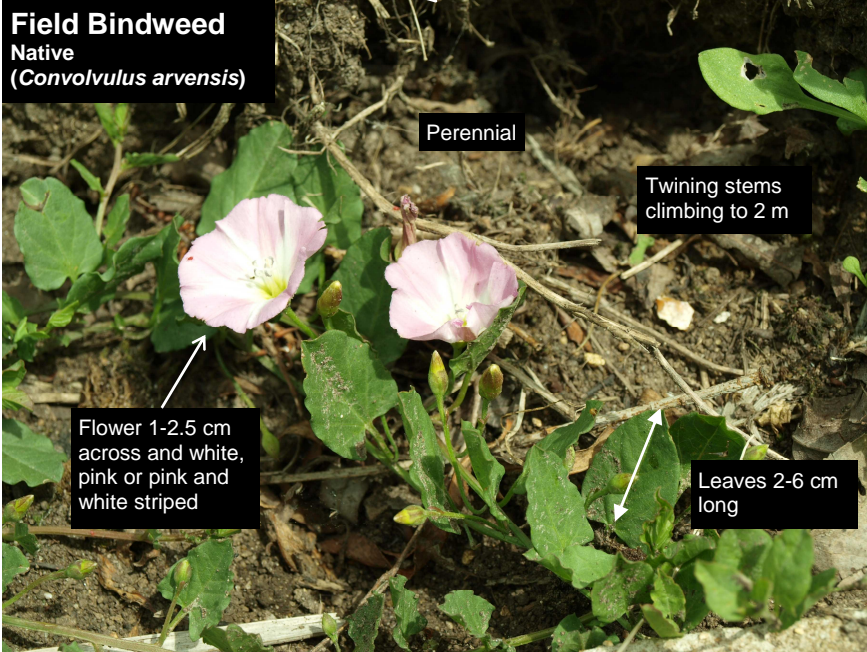
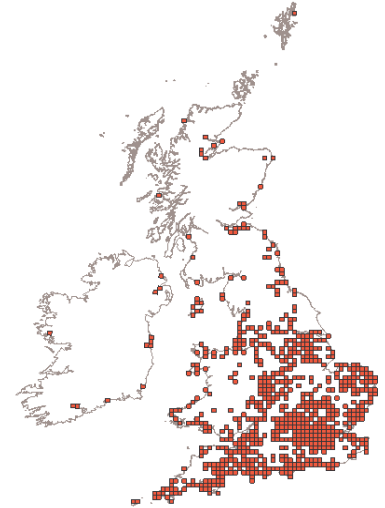
Similar Species

Other perennial climbers with triangular to heart-shaped leaves are Bindweeds. Two native species are Hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) and Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*). Both have distinctive trumpet-shaped flowers white, pink or pink with white stripes. Black-bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) has similar flowers to Russian-vine but its lower stems are not woody. Large bindweed (*Calystegia silvatica*) is very similar to Hedge bindweed and is only distinguished by leafy structures at the bases of the flowers.

Distribution

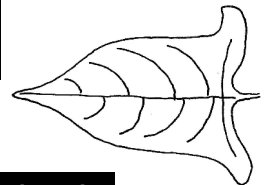
Scattered in lowland England and Wales, rarely occurring away from habitation but increasing in distribution.

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution.



Field Bindweed
Native
(*Convolvulus arvensis*)

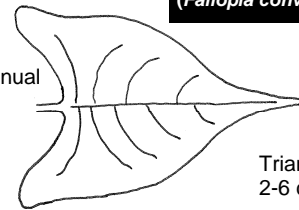
Leaves 2-5 cm long



Black-bindweed
Native
(*Fallopia convolvulus*)

Annual

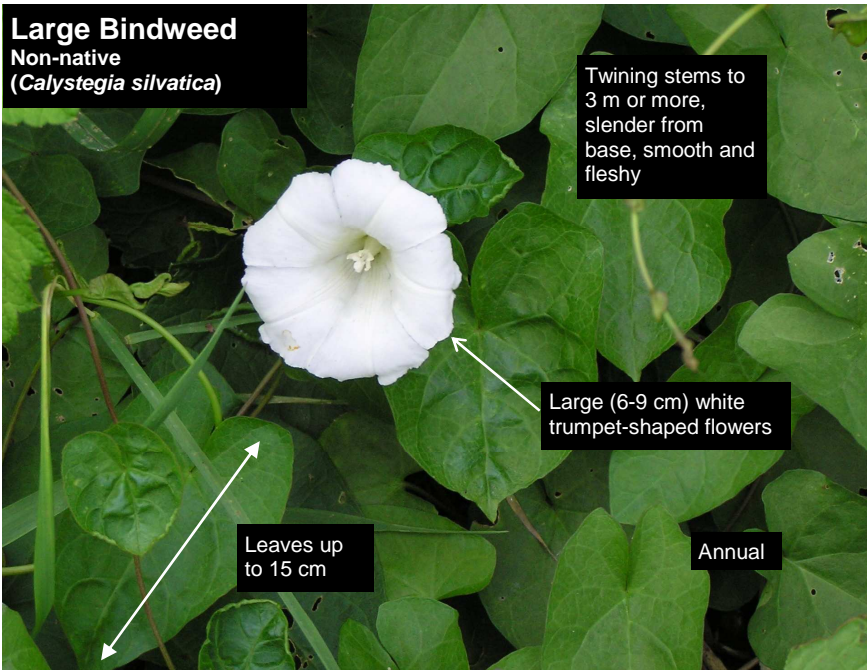
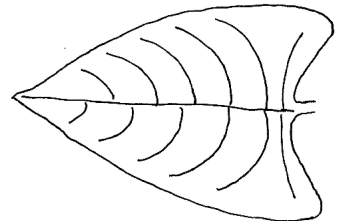
Twining stems up to 1 m



Triangular leaves 2-6 cm long

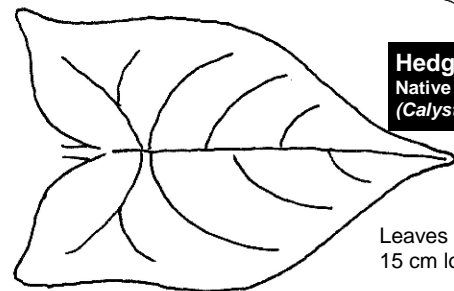
Russian-vine
Non-native
(*Fallopia baldschuanica*)

Leaves 3-6 cm long



Hedge Bindweed
Native
(*Calystegia sepium*)

Leaves up to 15 cm long



References and further reading:

Lousley, J E and Kent, D H (1981) "BSBI Handbook No. 3: Docks and Knotweeds of the British Isles". Botanical Society of the British Isles

Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora". Oxford University Press

Stace, C (1997) "New Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press