

# A Fast-growing, Thorny Threat to Farm Land and Natural Areas

## The Culprit: Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)



*This tree was once considered perfect for fronts yards and street plantings.*

Callery pear and its cultivars like Bradford pear are short, oval-shaped, and early flowering trees that dazzled homeowners and developers alike.

**Now we know =>**

Callery pear and its cultivars are invasive in 29 states. The tree has a weak structure and succumbs to wind and storms. The tree pops up in unmaintained fields, road edges, wetlands, and forests. Its flowers stink!



## Why It's a Problem

- Grows quickly
- Invades pastures-- its sharp thorns can puncture a tractor tire
- Spreads to natural areas and forests by birds eating its fruit
- Seeds are viable for up to 10 years in the soil. That's a long time!

## What Does It Look Like?



Callery pear has shiny, waxy, thick dark green leaves. Leaves are rounded with a small point at the tip and small teeth along the leaf edge.



The bark of older trees is brown with shallow furrows (grooves).  
Twigs may be hairy or smooth and reddish in color.  
Thorns reach up to 3 inches long.





Smelly flowers have 5 petals and are white. It is one of the first trees to flower in the spring. Fruits are small-- about the size of a large pea. The fruits mature and turn from green to brown with small dots.



Callery pear trees have a strong oval to pyramid shape. It is one of the first trees to flower in the spring, making it easy to identify.

## How Do I Control It?

- Individual tree seedlings can be pulled by hand. However, all roots must be removed to prevent resprouting.
- Basal bark and cut stump treatments can be used June-February.
- Foliar herbicide treatment is best suited for the summer months.



The cut stump method involves cutting down the plant and then applying herbicide on the stump to prevent regrowth. Callery pear will resprout vigorously if stumps are not treated.

## Additional Information

### Blue Ridge PRISM

-- [Callery Pear Fact Sheet](#)

-- [Resources on Invasive Plants](#)



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1. Susan A. Roth, Blue Ridge PRISM
2. Chuck Barger, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org
3. David Stephens, Bugwood.org
4. Tim Maywalt, Blue Ridge PRISM
5. Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
6. Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
7. Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org
8. Rowena Zimmermann, Blue Ridge PRISM