



Ilex verticillata

common winterberry

Family Aquifoliaceae

Origin Native

WIS Code FACW CoC 6

DESCRIPTION

Multi-stemmed shrub (2 to 8 m tall) with smooth gray to brown bark with horizontal lenticels (pores). Leaves (3 to 7 cm long) are alternate, elliptic, tapering to a pointed tip with finely toothed margins and distinct veins. The upper leaf surface is dark green, mostly hairless, and the lower surface is light green and hairy.

FLOWERS AND FRUITS

May to June, September to November. Male and female flowers are usually on separate plants (dioecious), with both flower types having five to eight white petals. Fruit is a round, bright smooth, red berry (5 to 7 mm), enclosing five to eight smooth nutlets and persisting on the branches through winter.

HABITAT

Swamps, bogs, wet woods, edges of ponds.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Ilex montana, mountain holly, sometimes reaches tree size to 12 m tall; it grows in upland forest habitats although it may be on the edge of wetlands and has four to five petals on female flowers with faintly hairy margins and four to five many-ribbed nutlets per fruit (not five to eight female petals without hairs and five to eight smooth nutlets). *Ilex mucronata*, catberry, a shorter shrub to 3 m tall, has smaller leaves (2 to 5 cm long) on purplish-green petioles, with few teeth on margins and a hard-pointed leaf tip (mucro); and long-stalked scarlet red berries.



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Ilex mucronata