

Russian Vine

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Fallopia baldschuanica*

AKA: *Reynoutria baldschuanica*, *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 Northern Ireland.

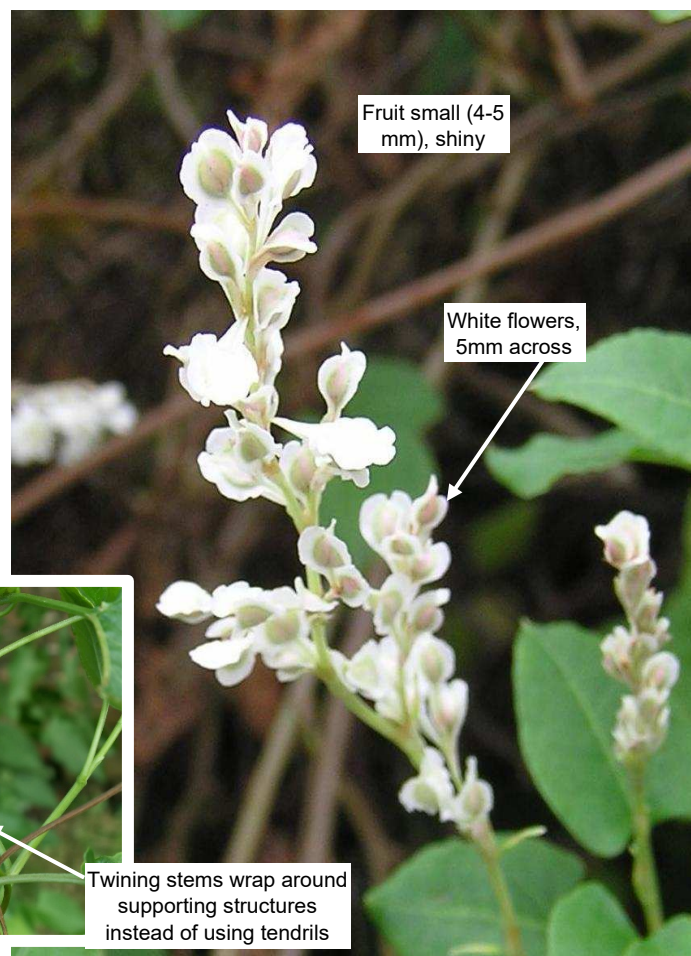
Russian-vine is present in Northern Ireland, with records close to habitation.

Introduced into gardens, 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.



Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Identification throughout the year

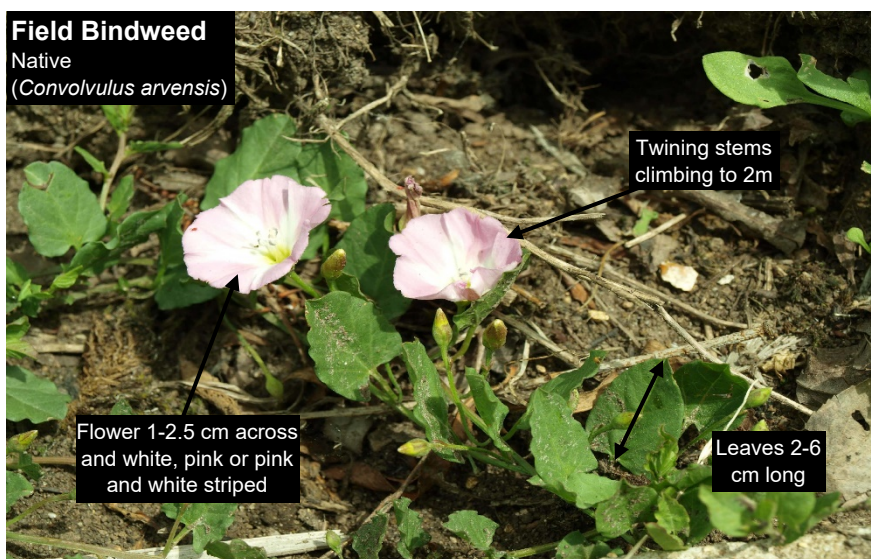
Russian-vine is easiest to identify when it is flowering, between July and October. Its woody lower stem distinguishes it at all times of the year from all other climbing species with the exception of Traveller's-joy (*Clematis vitalba*), the stem of which is also woody but more rope-like.

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.

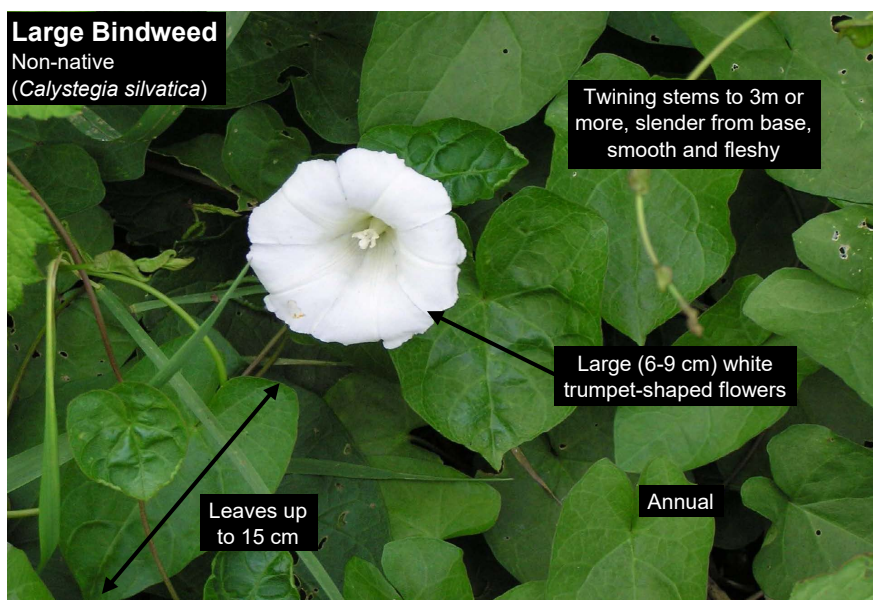
Field Bindweed

Native
(*Convolvulus arvensis*)



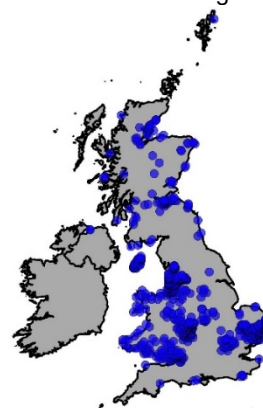
Large Bindweed

Non-native
(*Calystegia silvatica*)



Distribution

Scattered records in Northern Ireland, rarely occurring away from habitation but increasing in distribution.

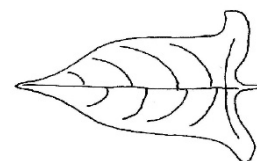


Source: NBN Atlas – available at
<https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000003761>
Check website for current distribution

Field Bindweed

Native
(*Convolvulus arvensis*)

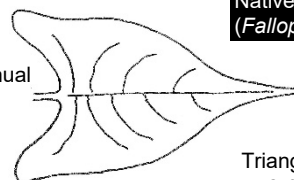
Leaves 2-5 cm long



Black-bindweed

Native
(*Fallopia convolvulus*)

Annual



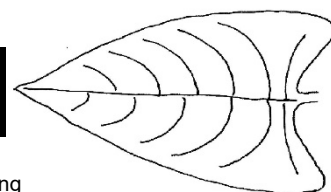
Twining stems up to 1m

Triangular leaves 2-6 cm long

Russian-vine

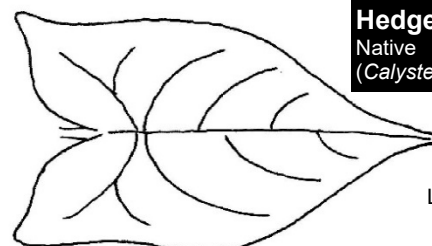
Invasive non-native
(*Fallopia baldschuanica*)

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 Hand- book 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
Photos from: FERA, Joseph Crofts, Richard Sands, Rob Brown

Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

Adapted for Northern Ireland
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