

HARDY KIWI

(Tara vine)

Actinidia arguta

Status in Maine: localized



Description: Woody, deciduous, climbing vine. **Leaves:** Alternate, simple, with toothed margins. 3-5" long. Petioles are red. **Flowers:** White to pale green; ~1" wide, 1-7 flowers/inflorescence. Male flowers have dark purple anthers. **Fruits:** ~1" long, green, and cylindrical; like a large grape, not fuzzy like the kiwis in grocery stores. Green pulp contains up to 200 seeds. Entire fruit is edible. **Stem:** Pale grayish-brown bark; thin and smooth, becoming flaky with age. Can grow to 50+', overtopping trees. **Roots:** Fibrous and shallow.

Native range: East Asia and Siberia. **How arrived in U.S.:** Introduced in 1877 as an ornamental.

Reproduction: Primarily by vegetative means. Roots emerge from stem nodes on sprawling vines in contact with soil. Hardy kiwi is generally regarded as dioecious, so male and female plants are needed for fruit set. Fruits, while not reliably produced in unmanaged stands, are attractive to wildlife and people.

Habitat: Prefers deep, well-drained soil. It can tolerate partial shade and clay soil. Woodlands, forest edges, and abandoned estates are its principal habitats. Vines will form dense tangles and overtake other vegetation including trees.

Similar native species: American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) has green petioles, furrowed bark (on older



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vines), and produces orange, berry-like capsules. Grape (*Vitis* spp.) has darker brown bark with a peeling, shredded appearance, as well as palmately-lobed leaves.

Similar non-native species: Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) has green petioles and produces many orange, berry-like capsules. The bark of older vines becomes corky and furrowed, unlike that of hardy kiwi.

Control methods: Vines can be hand pulled, dug or machine excavated, depending on size. Because it often grows over desirable vegetation, herbicide application can be difficult. Foliar applications of glyphosate or triclopyr amine are recommended. To kill larger vines growing up trees, cut stems near the ground and immediately apply triclopyr ester to cut stumps. Vines can be left to die in the canopy; pulling vines from the trees can cause additional damage.

