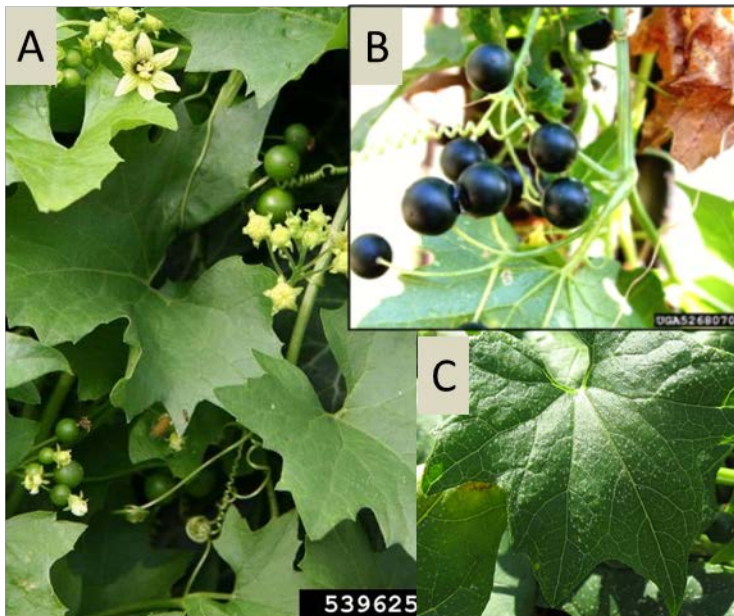


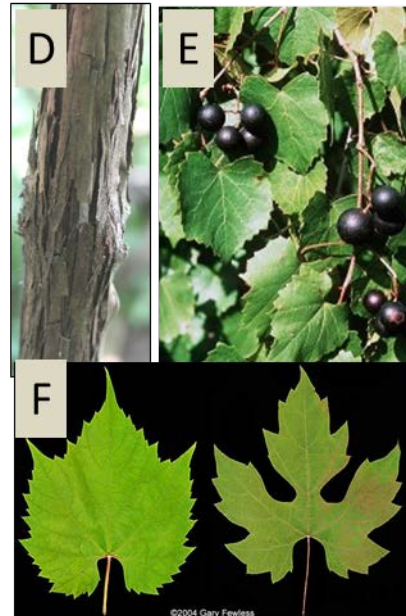
## White Bryony (*Bryonia alba*)

White bryony is a poisonous plant with foliage and fruit that closely resembles edible grapes. We hope this Monthly Weed Post will help people recognize white bryony that might be growing in their yard or neighborhood. Identification is especially important for those of you who like to forage or have small children that could mistake white bryony for grapes or other edible fruit.

**Identification:** White bryony is a non-native perennial herbaceous vine. Leaves are simple, palmate, and broadly toothed. Flowers are greenish white or pale yellow, up to ½ inch in diameter. Berries are initially light green, and change to black when mature (Figure B), closely resembling a Montana native, riverbank grape (*Vitis riparia*, Figure E). Unlike riverbank grape, white bryony has small white glands or dots on the surface and underside of the leaves (Figure C). White bryony does not have a woody stem like riverbank grape (Figure D).



White bryony (A, B, C)



Riverbank grape (D, E, F)

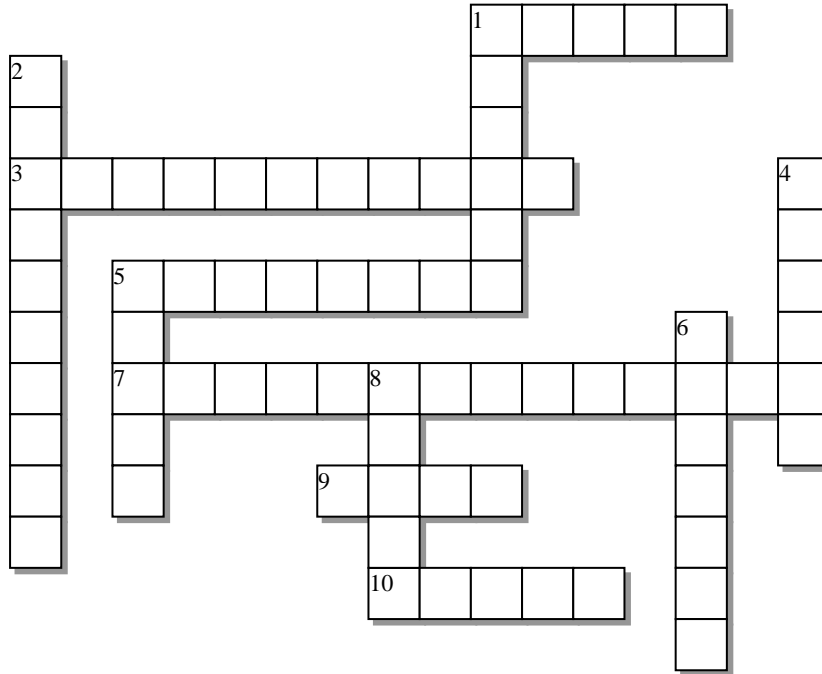
**Impacts:** Described as the “Kudzu of the West” white bryony grows rapidly, as much as 6” per day. Infestations growing on small trees and shrubs can eventually block all light to the host plant. Dense infestations of white bryony on shrub or tree hosts causes snow to accumulate on the limbs, leading to breakage or loss of branches, which can make the host susceptible to disease and insects. White bryony berries are poisonous. Human fatality has been reported when less than 40 berries were consumed.

**Habitat:** The plant generally occurs as a climber in trees and fence rows. It was introduced as an ornamental and used primarily in horticultural plantings, so it is commonly found in yards and old homesteads.

**Spread:** Birds consume the seed and spread it widely. The plant is often found growing beneath places where birds perch such as fencelines, trees, and powerlines.

**Management Priorities:** White bryony is not listed as a noxious weed in Montana, but it is listed in Idaho. If you find this plant in your neighborhood, we strongly recommend removing it. Digging up the root is the most effective control method and should be done in autumn after the leaves have died back. The roots must be severed 3-4 inches below the soil surface. Watch for new plants or re-growth and repeat root severing as often as necessary. Wear protective gear (gloves, long sleeves, etc.) when handling the plant as it can irritate the skin.

**Weed Post Puzzle: Test your knowledge of white bryony**



**Across:**

- 1 – Color of immature white bryony berries
- 3 - Thinking of making jam or wine from this plant? Think again—40 berries from this plant may be fatal
- 5 - Both white bryony and grape vines have this feature to help them cling to and climb up structures
- 7 – White bryony should not be confused with this edible Montana native
- 9 - Best time of year to sever white bryony roots
- 10 - White bryony's rapid and aggressive growth rate is similar to this invasive vine of the eastern U.S.

**Down:**

- 1 - These dots are on both sides of a white bryony leaf, but not riverbank grape leaves
- 2 - Some birds' favorite roost, white bryony is commonly found beneath these in suburban alleys (two words).
- 4 - Use these when handling white bryony to avoid skin irritation
- 5 - Sever the root at least \_\_\_\_\_ inches below the soil to control white bryony
- 6 - White bryony leaf shape
- 8 - Mature color of white bryony berries



Solutions to puzzle are posted on the MSU Extension Invasive Rangeland Weed website:  
<http://www.msuextension.org/invasiveplantsMangold/extensionsub.html>