

Porcelain-berry

Ampelopsis brevipedunculata (Maxim.) Trautv.

Alternate Latin Name: *Ampelopsis heterophylla* Sieb. & Zucc.

Alternate Common Name: Amur Peppervine, Porcelain Vine

- **woody vine; climbs by tendrils**; deciduous
- differs from grapes by **smooth bark and white** (not turning brownish) **pith** inside twigs
- **leaves** very shallowly to deeply **3 (or 5)-lobed**, with hairs on back (use hand lens)
- **tendrils** come out opposite the leaves and **never end in adhesive disks**
- **berries** may vary from **white, yellow, lilac, green, blue (ripe) in the same cluster**

Porcelain-berry is a distinctive vine, especially in the late summer and fall when it has showy clusters of hard, round, oddly-colored berries. The ripe (blue) fruits have a waxy sheen. The leaves are shiny on top. The leaves of horticultural varieties may be 5-lobed, deeply cut-leaved, and variegated in color. Leaves are alternate, but they may appear whorled because new leaves come out from swollen joints on the stem at the point where the stems of the older leaves are attached. Tendrils growing opposite the leaves add to the whorled appearance. Porcelain-berry flowers continuously from July to September. The tiny, yellowish flowers are borne in short, wide clusters on stems that come out opposite the newer leaves. The leaves extend farther from the vine than do the flower clusters. Porcelain-berry differs from grapevines in the **unusual color of its fruits and their wide (not long) clusters**; and in its **non-watery pith that remains white (rather than turning brownish) after exposure to sunlight**.

Porcelain-berry grows vigorously in open areas (where it will rapidly and thickly cover the ground or trees and shrubs) at forest edges, roadsides, or on stream banks. Berries are said to be dispersed by birds. The vine also may reproduce from stem or root segments.



*Text and photos by: Charlotte Pyle, October 2002
Helpful review provided by: Lillian Willis*