

HALESIA CAROLINA L.
Silverbell

FAMILY: Styracaceae

SYNONYM: *Halesia tetraptera* Ellis var. *tetraptera*

HABIT: Small trees, often with several trunks near the base, to 10 m.; flowering in May; fruiting July.

SIMILAR SPECIES: In vegetative condition, this is a rather nondescript alternate, serrated-leaved shrub or small tree. In flower it is similar to *Styrax americana* which has larger entire obovate leaves. Both of these species are extremely rare in Ohio, however. The four-winged fruits of *Halesia* are also distinctive and could help identify this plant in the fall.

TOTAL RANGE: FL to e. TX, n. to VA, WV, KY, s. OH, s. IN, s. IL, and OK.

STATE RANGE: There is a 1929 collection from Scioto County.

HABITAT: On acidic soils in rich mesophytic woods of slopes and bottomlands.

HAZARDS: Collection for horticultural purposes; overgrowth by taller woody species.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown if natural recovery is allowed, but if planted in native habitat, probably very good. Seeds generally show good germination, oftentimes germinating the second year after falling. Techniques are known to artificially hasten the dormancy period, however, and twig cuttings can be vegetatively propagated with ease. This species is known to flower and fruit north of its native range in cultivation.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect flowering or fruiting branchlets; avoid over-collecting. An effort should be made to determine whether or not the population is of native origin.

COMMENTS: Although this species is planted outside of its natural range in Ohio, it is not known as an escape. Its Ohio distribution is along drainage lines of the pre-glacial Teays River, and this species possibly was historically distributed into Ohio along this waterway. Searches for this plant should be made in appropriate habitats along this route.

This is an extremely variable species with regard to flower color, leaf size and pubescence, and form of the plant. An Appalachian variety, var. *monticola*, is sometimes recognized that is a less-branched taller tree, up to 30 m. This variety is not known from Ohio.

Reveal and Seldin (1976) suggest that *Halesia tetraptera* is the correct name of this species, but not all writers accept this concept.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

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