NOTEWORTHY COLLECTION

WISCONSIN

Euonymus obovata Nutt. (Celastraceae). Running Strawberry-bush

Previous knowledge. This low, sprawling shrub ranges from western New York to Michigan, south to West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri (Gleason and Cronquist 1991). It is at its northern limit in Michigan, where it grows in various kinds of deciduous woods including swampy woods, upland beech-maple, and oak-hickory (Voss 1985). It is not found in the Upper Peninsula but has been found in the counties bordering Lake Michigan north to Muskegon County (Voss 1985). Euonymus obovata is also found in scattered locations throughout Illinois. It has been recorded from Will, DuPage, Cook, and Lake Counties (Swink and Wilhelm 1994). These collections are the closest to the Wisconsin border that it has been found.

Significance. Euonymus obovata is a shrub that was previously unknown in Wisconsin. It was collected in Milwaukee County three times in the late 1970’s in Doctor’s Park and Grant Park, and in Grant Park in 1939. The two collections from Doctor’s park were from low, wet woodlots and one is labeled as having been a “large colony”. The 1970’s collection from Grant Park was in a ravine near Lake Michigan. The 1939 collection from Grant Park contains no information regarding its location and habitat. These two parks have relatively good quality remnants of mesic woods where the specimens were found. The specimens were not attributed to the flora of WI perhaps because of their being found in a park setting under the assumption that they were planted there. The parks do have large populations of exotics, and some planted ornamental species, however, it is unlikely that E. obovata was planted, as it is not at all common in the horticultural trade (Dirr 1998). Neither park was visited to see if the colonies are still present.

The newer collection (Zaborsky 00001), made in 2005, is from Outagamie County and indicates the bona fide occurrence of E. obovata in Wisconsin (Fig. 1). This is 125 miles away from Lake County, Illinois and 119 miles from Grant Park. The specimen was collected from a large population in a sugar maple-basswood woodlot. The woodlot is in the middle of farmland but has low levels of exotics and an extremely rich herbaceous community. Podophyllum peltatum, Maianthemum canadense, Erythronium albium, E. americanum, Claytonia virginiana, Sanguinaria canadensis, Anemone quinquefolia, and Allium tricoccum are all extremely abundant in the area and grow alongside and within the very large colony of Euonymus obovata. Woody associates include Acer saccharum, Tilia americana, Viburnum lentago, Prunus virginiana, and Fraxinus pennsylvanica. After talking to the owners, who have owned the property for three generations, it was learned that the woodlot has had very little disturbance. The only species planted in it were Picea pungens and P. glauca along the field borders. A few trees were harvested for firewood in years past and a small pond was made for field runoff. The low level of exotics and high concentrations of spring wildflowers, and of E. obovata itself, would seem to rule out man-made introduction of this species.

LITERATURE CITED

——John G. Zaborsky
Daniel O. Trainer Natural Resources Building
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481