South Carolina Forestry Commission

SC-EPPC

BRADFORD PEAR

PYRUS CALLERYANA

Callery or Bradford pear, *Pyrus calleryana*, was introduced to the United States in 1909, and its uniform shape, profuse white flowers, and bright red fall foliage made the Callery pear a much-planted ornamental throughout the southeast. For many years the trees were sterile, not producing fruit. But in the 2000s trees began to cross pollinate and produce abundant amounts of fruit that were spread by birds.

Bradford pear produces abundant white flowers before it leafs out.

Identification

Callery pear is a deciduous tree that reaches 60 feet in height (18 m). Callery pear produces abundant white flowers before it leafs out, and these flowers are pungent and unpleasant smelling. The foliage is ovate with a long petiole. In the fall the foliage is bright red and trees often have marble-sized hard fruit on them. Landowners should not confuse Bradford pears with Chickasaw plum trees, which have very similar flowers that begin blooming around the same time as pear trees do.

How it spreads

Birds consume the fruit after frost has softened it, subsequently spreading it. It can be very abundant in old fields.

Managing Callery pear

Do not plant Callery or Bradford pear. Instead, plant native alternatives, such as serviceberry, fringe tree, tupelo, or dogwood among many others. Trees should be cut and stumps immediately treated with herbicides to eliminate sprouting response.

Contact information

If you would like more information on Callery pear, contact David Jenkins at the SC Forestry Commission at djenkins@scfc.gov or contact the Clemson Invasive Species Program at https://www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/plant-protection/invasive/.

For information on how you can combat invasive plants in your community visit the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant website at https://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/ or send an email to southcarolinaeppc@gmail.com.