Chinese Privet
*Ligustrum sinense*

**Plant:** A thicket-forming shrub with a spreading canopy to 5 m (16 ft) tall, from *rhizomes*.

**Stem:** Round, bark not fissured, brownish to gray, opposite branching, increasingly upward. Branches gray to green with light dots (*lenticels*). Twigs short-rusty hairy, long, slender, and flexible.

**Leaves:** Deciduous to semi-evergreen, opposite, ovate to elliptical, 2–4 cm (3/4–1 1/2 in) long and 1–3 cm (3/8–1 1/4 in) wide, rounded at both ends, with a hairy midrib beneath. *Petioles* 1–5 mm (1/16–3/16 in) long, rusty hairy, opposite leaves held at right angles to stems.

**Flowers:** April–June. Loosely branching, conical, terminal and upper *axillary* clusters. White, 4-petaled, fragrant, corolla tube 1.5–3 mm (1/16–1/8 in) long, roughly equal or shorter than the lobes.

**Fruit and Seeds:** October–February. Pale green ripening to a blue-black *drupe*, ovoid, 6–7 mm (1/4–9/32 in) long and 4 mm (3/16 in) wide, hanging in dense clusters.
Range: An exotic introduced from China in 1852 as an ornamental shrub. Now common throughout the Southeast including high mountains.

Ecology: Aggressive and troublesome exotic in most areas of the Southeast. Often forms dense thickets, especially in bottomland forests where it excludes all hardwood regeneration. Very common fencerow shrub thereby gaining access to forests, fields, and rights-of-way. Colonizes via rhizomes and prolific seed production. Seeds widely dispersed by birds and other animals.

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(Added photos by Ted Bodner)