

## *Vinca minor*, Periwinkle

This plant is native to Europe and southern Russia and was introduced to the US as an ornamental groundcover. It grows rapidly, forming dense mats on the ground. This growth can further displace native vegetation, primarily at the herbaceous level.

**Description:** This herbaceous perennial is a short ground cover, growing to a height of .5 to 1 feet above the ground. It has a trailing stem with shiny green, elliptical shaped leaves (1.5 inches long). These leaves are evergreen and can be seen throughout the winter.

**Control:** Periwinkle can be pulled or dug up, making sure to remove all of the underground portions. Mowing may be an option to trim the plant back but continuous mowing would be needed for anything approaching eradication. Systemic herbicides may also be used, though the glossiness of the leaves often requires a surfactant.

**Look-alikes:** *Vinca minor* is very similar to *Vinca major*, which is similarly invasive but less common in New York. This species may also resemble the Madagascar Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*), which can be distinguished by the flower coloration. The leaves themselves look like the also evergreen wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortuneii*) though the growth pattern is different.

**Flower Time and Description:** Tubular, lavender blue flowers grow in the spring (May – June), showing into the summer and fall. The petals of periwinkle has somewhat of a whorled pattern.

