

# Treeways

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## Grapevines Gone Wild

Native grape, *Vitis riparia*, grows throughout the Minnesota and only occasionally causes problems. Most often grape vines are noticed as lovely green plants that provide food for wildlife, fall color, and wreath making material for holiday decorations. Their leaves are a favorite food of the notorious Japanese beetle.

Sometimes they will overgrown living trees and bushes and shade them to the point of killing them. Massive vines may actually break down large tree branches or mature trees. They can overgrow young evergreens and shade them out to the point where the evergreen tree dies for lack of sunlight. Wild grapes are not typically a problem in a competitive natural setting. However in your landscaped yard grapes may be a problem when birds carry in the seed and the vines grows up amongst the branches and boughs of desirable shrubs and trees.

Usually grapes and other vines grow most aggressively at the edges of woodlands. The vines are easily controlled by pulling them out including the root if they are still quite small or cutting them off near the base and treating the cut stump with a chemical brush killer such as trichlopyr. The vines themselves can be carefully pulled out of the individual landscape plants and composted or burned when you get your next burning permit. Or as I mentioned earlier they are lovely material for creating a holiday wreath once the leaves have fallen off.

Grape vines are not the kudzu of the north though in isolated situations it may seem so. Once the vines have been pulled out of your trees or shrubs and the stumps have been treated with brush killer the only thing left to do is monitor for new young vines growing from seeds and to pull them out while they are small.

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