

***Solanum dulcamara*, Bittersweet Nightshade**

General Botanical Characteristics

Solanum dulcamara is a woody perennial vine that can grow 6 feet to 12 feet high. Its lower leaves are alternating and ovate while commonly the upper leaves are found to be 3 lobed with 2 shorter lateral segments. Flowers are generally purple or white. The berries are red colored. The seeds are small (about 1 inch long), flesh colored, irregular disks, and have a dull glistening appearance.

Seasonal Development

Flowering of *Solanum dulcamara* occurs July through August and the berries ripen August through October.

Distribution/Habitat

Solanum dulcamara is native to Europe, northern Africa, and eastern Asia. Naturalized in North America, it is often



found from Nova Scotia to Minnesota, south to North Carolina and Missouri and from Idaho to Washington and California. It is an indicator of moist environments and thrives in disturbed areas, roadsides, edge of moist woods, and waste places.



Interesting Facts

- The berries of *Solanum dulcamara* are poisonous due to the existence of solanine, a toxic alkaloid.
- The poisonous berries have proven to be fatal to some species of birds and rabbits.

References

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