

***Rubus allegheniensis / Ampelopsis brevipedunculata* Shrubland**

COMMON NAME	Blackberry / Porcelain berry Shrubland
SYNONYM	
TNC SYSTEM	Terrestrial
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	IV. Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	IV.B. Deciduous Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	IV.B.2. Cold-deciduous Shrubland
FORMATION	IV.B.2.a. Temperate deciduous Shrubland
ALLIANCE	Alliance undefined
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL	3

RANGE

This community is an early seral stage and has only been identified at Rock Creek National Park. Similar groupings of species are likely to occur in other parts of the eastern United States.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

This shrubland alliance occurs in openings in the forest – either along ecotones between forest stands and open areas dominated by graminoids, or in small gaps within a forest matrix. These small patches of shrubland occur on many soil types, although the species present changes somewhat with soils. Fewer exotic plants are found on more acidic soils. However, the size of the opening and the length of time since the disturbance that created it are more important factors affecting species composition in these early successional associations.

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM	Not applicable.
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MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Rock Creek Park

<u>Strata</u>	<u>Species</u>
Sub-canopy	(Sparse to absent)
Shrub layer	<i>Ampelopsis brevipedunculata</i> , <i>Rosa mulitflora</i> , <i>Rubus allegheniensis</i> , <i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i> , <i>Smilax</i> spp., <i>Fagus grandifolia</i> , <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> , <i>Prunus serotina</i> , <i>Ulmus rubra</i> , <i>Lindera benzoin</i>
Herbaceous	(Sparse to Patchy)

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Rubus allegheniensis, *Smilax* spp., exotics

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

In Rock Creek Park, this is an early successional association that is dominated by exotic vegetation, especially porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) and multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) with other native and non-native vines – Asian bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), English Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), greenbriar (*Smilax* spp.), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), and/or grape (*Vitis* spp.). Usually these vines will be growing over blackberry (*Rubus allegheniensis*), wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), and/or seedlings of tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), or slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*). Two variants of this association were evident within Rock Creek Park. These relate to position within the forest: blackberry shrublands are along ecotones between forest stands and open areas like meadows or mowed lawns, while forest gaps are totally surrounded by forest.

BLACKBERRY SHRUB VARIANT:

This is a shrubland of edges. Typically blackberry (*Rubus allegheniensis*) and/or multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) are covered densely by porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*) mixed with other vines. Rarely native or non-native tree seedlings are struggling to survive under the heavy vine cover. Most often the tree species are early successional species – cherry (*Prunus* spp.), elm (*Ulmus rubra*), mulberry (*Morus* spp.), tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), princess tree (*Paulonia tomentosa*), or catalpa (*Catalpa bignonioides*). Usually the vine cover is too dense to allow herbaceous growth, but occasionally composites (Asteraceae) manage to survive.

FOREST GAP VARIANT:

This variant is more variable than the blackberry shrubland, in that the relative age, size, soils, and aspect have a pronounced effect on the species present. Gaps that are younger or more mesic tend to be dominated by exotics, while older, drier openings have more tree seedlings and shrubs – especially beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), oak species (*Quercus* spp.), tulip (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), or mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*). Gaps that have mountain laurel almost never have exotics, probably due to the acid soils.

NOTEWORTHY SPECIES

CONSERVATION RANK GW

RANK JUSTIFICATION

This community is not of conservation interest at this time.

COMMENTS

PLOTS

58 (forest gap variant)

UNASSIGNED PLOTS

The following plots could not be assigned to natural community alliances or associations. They represent areas dominated by non-natural vegetation or non-native weedy species.

36
66
70
71
74
78
79
80
82