

Which Bindweed Am I Looking At? A Quick ID Guide For Three Common Species

Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)

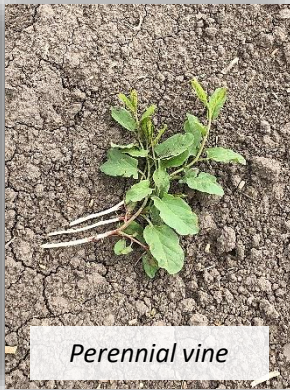
Field bindweed is a prostrate to climbing perennial vine in the *Convolvulaceae* (morning glory family). The species possesses taproots that can reach tens of feet deep and an extensive lateral root system that occupies the top 1 to 2 feet of soil. Root pieces 1 inch in length can re-sprout following fragmentation.



Seedlings emerge in spring/early summer. Cotyledons are square to kidney-shaped. Leaves are alternate and arrow-shaped and rounded at the apex; the leaf base is relatively flat with lobes that point away from the stem. On average, field bindweed leaves are approximately 1 to 2.5 inches in length. Leaves can be hairless to hairy. Vines can be up to 6.5 feet long.



Emerged seedling



Perennial vine

Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*)

Hedge bindweed is a perennial vine in the *Convolvulaceae* (morning glory family). The species has an extensive, but shallow, rhizomatous root system. Much like field bindweed, it can spread via the regeneration of fragmented rhizomes. Like field bindweed, pieces 1 inch in size can regrow.



Hedge bindweed vs. field bindweed leaves

Seedlings emerge in spring/early summer. Cotyledons are square with prominent indentations at the apex. Leaves are alternate and triangular with sharply pointed apices. The leaf base is deeply lobed, especially compared to field bindweed. Leaves, which are smooth, can be up to 5 inches in length. Vines can be up to 9 feet long.



Hedge bindweed vs. field bindweed root systems
(Photo courtesy of Dr. Andrew Senesac)



Wild buckwheat (*Fallopia convolvulus*)

Wild buckwheat, also known as black bindweed, is a fast-growing annual vine with fragile stems in the *Polygonaceae* (knotweed/smartweed family). The root system of wild buckwheat is composed solely of fibrous roots. Unlike the perennial bindweeds, reproduction does not occur from root fragments.



Wild buckwheat/black bindweed

Seedlings emerge in spring/early summer. Cotyledons are long and oval. Leaves are alternate, almost heart-shaped and pointed at the apex. The leaf base has deep and rounded to pointed lobes. At the base of each leaf, a cylindrical, membranous ocrea surrounds the stem. Leaves can be up to 3.5 inches long. Vines are branched at the base; internodes are long.



Field bindweed vs. wild buckwheat/black bindweed

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Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*)



Flowers (approximately 1 inch in length and trumpet- or funnel-shaped because the petals are fused) are produced early summer through fall, with each opening for a single day. Flowers are mostly solitary, white to pink in color, and produced in the axils of leaves. A set of small, leafy bracts approximately 0.5 inches in size can be found about 1 inch below the base of the flower tube.

Brown to black and wedge/half moon-shaped seeds are produced in round, papery capsules. Seed are dormant and persistent in the soil.

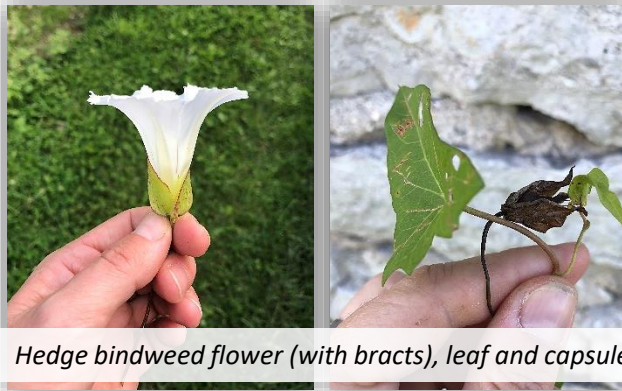


Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*)



Flowers (usually white, sometimes pink, especially on Long Island) are produced in mid to late summer and into the fall. Flowers are solitary in leaf axils and white in color. Hedge bindweed flowers are also trumpet- or funnel-shaped (due to their fused petals) and larger than those of field bindweed (greater than 2 inches in length). Unlike field bindweed, the bracts of hedge bindweed are very prominent (concealing the sepals) and overlap at the base of the flower.

Brown to black, egg-shaped seed are produced in papery capsules. Seed are dormant and persistent in the soil.



Wild buckwheat (*Fallopia convolvulus*)



Flowers are produced from mid-summer through fall. Individual flowers are small and inconspicuous (less than 0.5 inches in length), unlike those of field and hedge bindweed. There are no petals (just sepals that are white to pink to green in color). Flowers are held in small clusters in the axils of the leaves or at the end of stems (racemes). There are no bracts present below the flowers.

Wild buckwheat produces triangular (3-angled) seed that are short-lived. Unlike field and hedge bindweed seed, which may last for decades in the soil, black bindweed seed only persist a few years.

