

Japanese Rose

Species Description

Scientific name: *Rosa rugosa*

AKA: Rhosyn Japan (welsh)

Native to: East Asia

Habitat: Hedgerows, sand dunes, sea-cliffs, road verges and waste ground

This vigorously suckering, deciduous shrub has many slender thorns on its stems and with its characteristic purplish-pink flowers is readily distinguishable from other roses found in the wild. Typically resulting from garden escapes or material thrown out from gardens. It is often well-naturalised, forming extensive and dense thickets, which can smother native species, so reducing biodiversity and dominating amenity planting.

Although introduced into cultivation in the UK in the late 18th century, it was not successfully grown until the mid-19th century. It is very common in gardens, parks and amenity plantings, often established in mass plantings. It was first recorded in the wild in Cumberland in 1927. Its distribution in the wild is increasing.

Japanese rose is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the year

Japanese rose is easy to identify when it is flowering in June to July or has fruits in autumn. It is more difficult to identify in winter as it is deciduous, although its upright stems with numerous slender thorns will help to distinguish it from many other species throughout the year.

Similar Species

There are some common native species of rose which could be confused with Japanese rose. These include:

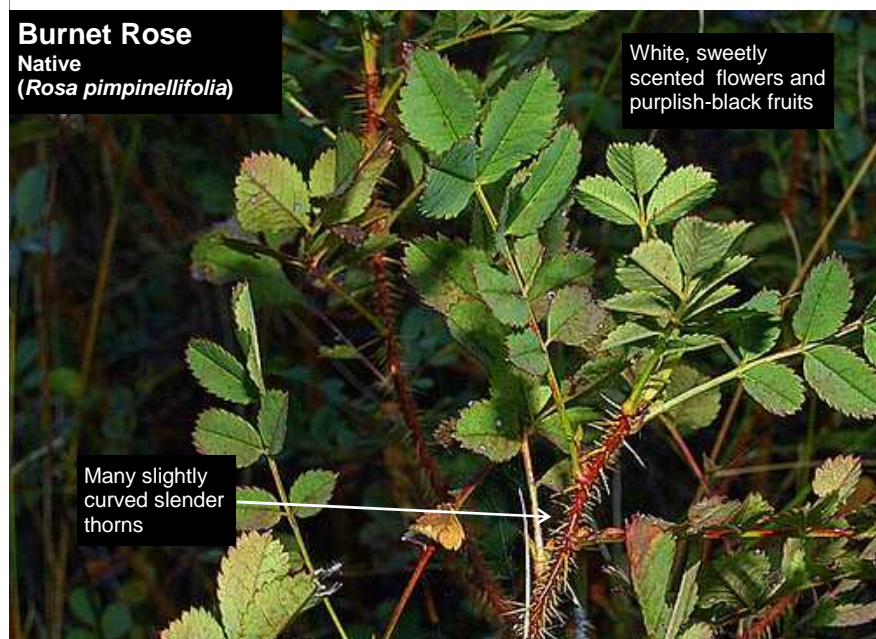
Burnet rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia/spinosissima*), which has many fine thorns on its stem but white flowers and purple-black fruits and produces vigorous suckers;

Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), which has pale pink flowers, red oval fruits and curved thorns; a trailing plant of hedgerows and woodland;

Sweet-briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*), which has bright pink flowers, red oval fruits and curved thorns and grows in scrub; and

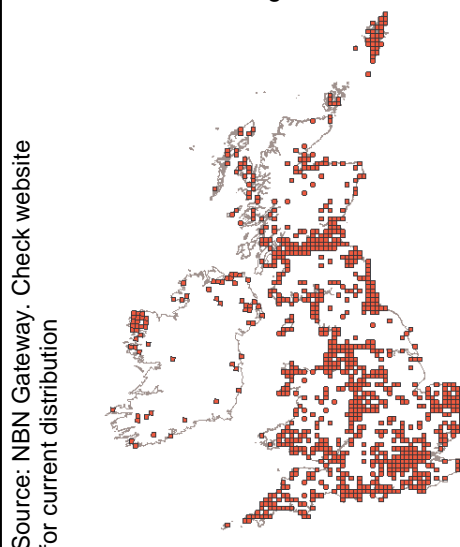
Field-rose (*Rosa arvensis*), which has white flowers, red oval fruits and curved thorns, and is a trailing plant of hedgerows and woodland.

Japanese rose also forms hybrids with other species, which can make identification difficult.



Distribution

Japanese rose is scattered throughout low-land Britain, increasing in distribution.



References and further reading:

Graham, G.G. and Primavesi, A.L. (2005) "Roses of Great Britain and Ireland". BSBI Handbook No. 7, BSBI, London

Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) "New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora". Oxford University Press

Stace, C (1997) "New Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press