

Wall Cotoneaster

Species Description

Scientific name: *Cotoneaster horizontalis*

AKA: Wall-spray, Herringbone Cotoneaster, Rock Cotoneaster, Rockspray

Native to: Western China

Habitat: Tolerant of dry and nutrient poor substrates, and is most commonly found in urban habitats, calcareous grasslands and cliffs.

Wall Cotoneaster is a deciduous or semi-evergreen shrub which can grow to around one metre in height. Originally introduced into cultivation in the early 1980s, it quickly became popular among gardeners for its hardiness, attractive berries and foliage. This species was first recorded growing wild in 1940 and has since been spreading rapidly throughout the country.

This plant is similar in appearance to a range of other species commonly found in GB and thus identification may be easiest by its herringbone shaped branches. Other characteristics of this plant include small leaves (up to 1.2cm long), white flowers with spreading petals and numerous red berries.

Within urban areas which often have low ecological value, the benefits of this plant may outweigh its costs. Nonetheless, within areas of high conservation value e.g. limestone grassland, Wall Cotoneaster poses a significant threat to local biodiversity by outcompeting many rare and important species. Furthermore, although attractive, the plant's berries are poisonous to humans.

Wall Cotoneaster is listed under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and it is therefore illegal to plant or otherwise allow the escape of this plant into the wild.



Key ID Features



Identification throughout the Year

Wall Cotoneaster is readily indefinable year-round due to its distinctive herringbone shaped branches. This plant produces many pink buds which blossom into small white flowers between May and June (pictured left). After flowering, plants will produce small red berries which are very similar in appearance to Britain's native Hawthorn bush (*Crataegus monogyna*). Direct contact with this plant is not advised as this may lead to dermatitis in some cases.



Similar Species

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
[Native]

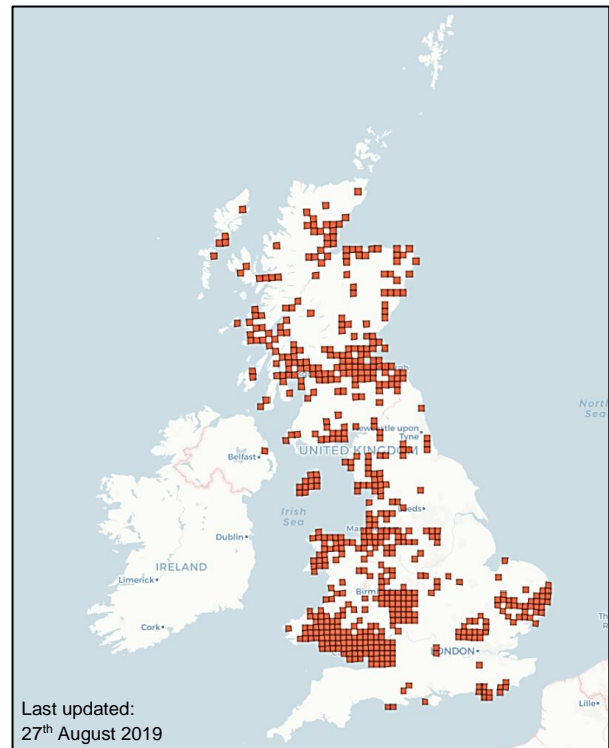


Himalayan Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster simonsii*)
[Invasive Non-native]



Distribution

Largely restricted to Wales and Scotland, sparse populations have also been recorded throughout England and recently, in Northern Ireland.



References and Further Reading:

CABI (2018) *Cotoneaster horizontalis* (wall-spray). Available at: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/16870> (Accessed: 06th June 2019).

Pilington, S. (2011) *Wall Cotoneaster, Cotoneaster horizontalis*. Available at: <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?speciesId=964> (Accessed: 06th June 2019).

Streeter, D. (2009) *Collins flower guide : the most complete guide to the flowers of Britain & Europe*. London: Collins.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, c. 69. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69> (Accessed: 11th June 2018).