

Eastern black nightshade

Solanum ptycanthum Dun.

Life cycle: Erect, branching summer annual. Leaves: Seedlings have small, egg-shaped cotyledons with a pointed tip and a purplish tinge underneath followed by alternate, petiolated, simple leaves. First leaves are generally smooth, egg-shaped with wavy margins and a purplish tinge underneath; later leaves are slightly hairy, egg- to diamond-shaped with entire to irregularly toothed margins.

Stems: Erect and branching, up to 3-foot-tall stems with few hairs.

Flowers and fruit: Flowers are white to purple tinged, star-shaped with five petals fused at the base surrounding five bright yellow anthers; found in downward facing clusters. Berries are glossy black at maturity and globe-shaped, and contain up to 110 seeds.

Reproduction: Seeds.

Toxicity: All plant parts are toxic to animals.



Eastern black nightshade seedling.



Eastern black nightshade mature berries.



Young eastern black nightshade plant.

Eastern black nightshade *continued...*



All photos this page: Steven A. Gower



Upper leaf surface of eastern black nightshade.

Purplish lower leaf surface of eastern black nightshade.

Similar weeds

Bittersweet nightshade (*S. dulcamara* L.).

Differs by having a vining, perennial habit; leaves that are oval to egg-shaped with pointed tips, smooth margins and usually two basal lobes; and purple to blue flowers that yield bright red, oval berries at maturity.



Left: Mature berries of bittersweet nightshade. Right: Bittersweet nightshade leaf.



Bittersweet nightshade flower.