

# Japanese rose

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## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Rosa rugosa*

**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. It is very common in gardens, parks and amenity plantings, often established in mass plantings. Its distribution in the wild is increasing.

Introduced to Europe in the 18th century and spread into the wild by escaping from gardens and garden waste. It is still widely sold as a garden plant. Garden escapes or material thrown out from gardens is likely to be a key vector for spread in Northern Ireland, invasion of coastal dunes by is correlated with proximity to roads, tracks and houses. It is often well-naturalised, forming extensive and dense thickets, which can smother native species, so therefore reducing biodiversity and dominating amenity planting.



## 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;

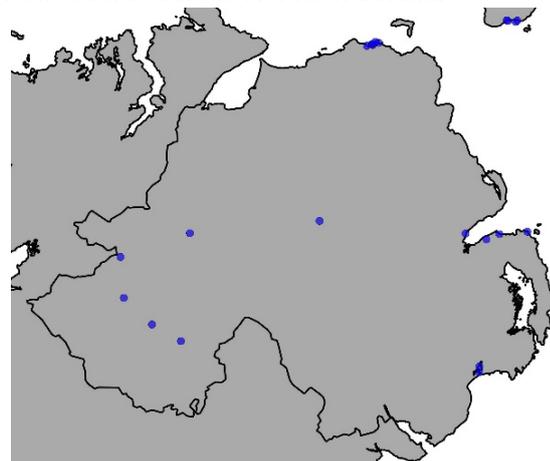
**Sweet-briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*)**, which has bright pink flowers, red oval fruits and curved thorns and grows in scrub; and

**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

Few records across Northern Ireland.



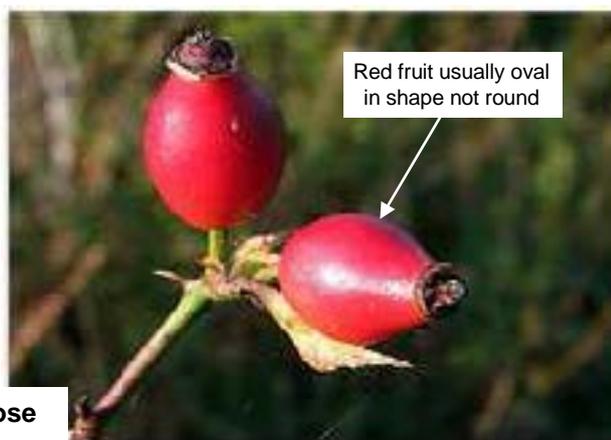
Source: Northern Ireland NBN atlas available at <https://northernireland-species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0000462477>  
Check website for current distribution.



Pale, pink flowers

Growing in hedgerows, rarely forming bushes

**Dog-Rose**  
Native  
(*Rosa canina*)



Red fruit usually oval in shape not round

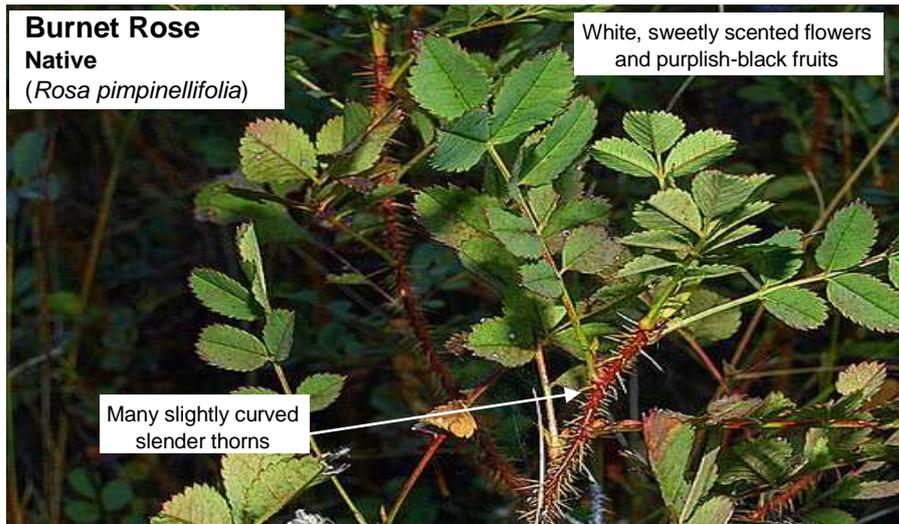


Dog-rose thorns are small, sharp and curved

**Burnet Rose**  
Native

(*Rosa pimpinellifolia*)

White, sweetly scented flowers and purplish-black fruits



Many slightly curved slender thorns

### References and further reading:

Graham, G.G. and Primavesi, A.L. (2005) "Roses of Great Britain and Ireland". BSBI Hand- book 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  
Photos from: J. Bognar, Kata Tolgyesi, Max Wade.

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Adapted for Northern Ireland  
Environment Agency 2020