

ed variety of the common barberry is one of the chief culprits responsible for the spread of rust.

The harmless Japanese barberry is a low, gracefully spreading shrub, seldom more than four or five feet tall. The bark is reddish in color and the spines are smaller than those on the common variety. They are usually borne singly or in small clusters of three. The flowers and red berries are borne singly or in groups of two or three like gooseberries. The rather small leaves have smooth edges and are in clusters.

Hybrids between the common and the Japanese species are not at all uncommon. These hybrids may be intermediate in appearance or they may look like either parent. They may rust, even when they resemble the immune parent.

There are many other species and varieties of the barberry in addition to those mentioned, but they are not commonly propagated and planted. Some of them rust and some do not. In general those which resemble the common barberry in appearance rust, while those which look like the Japanese form do not. Some of these forms are native in the United States, but they grow for the most part in the mountains or on the Southwestern plains and do not seem to be a factor in the rust problem.

#### **The Wanderings of the Barberry**

The Common barberry is a native of the mountains of Central Asia. It was probably brought into Europe by the Saracen invaders who used the berries as medicine. By the middle ages it had made itself pretty much at home in its adopted country. As a matter of fact the people apparently wanted it and cultivated it. The monks evidently cultivated it quite extensively as a

medicinal plant. Later it was cultivated as a fruit bush. The berries were used for preserves and the juice was used as a substitute for vinegar and lemon juice. A pupil of the great botanist Linnaeus recommended that barberry juice be used instead of lemon juice in making "The good-tasting, healthful English drink called *Punch-Potus Polopuntiae*." Other suggested uses for the juice and other parts of the plant were as a mouth wash, as a remedy for scurvy, fever, delicate appetite, constipation, jaundice, slivers and other troubles and ailments too numerous to mention. The wood was also used and the bush was used for hedges which did service as fences between farms. The bush was brought into the New World by the colonists and flourished. It has been spread over the entire country and has even escaped from cultivation in many places, especially in the New England States and to a lesser extent elsewhere. Being a mountain plant originally, it thrives best in rocky places, especially in limestone hills. This is a very unfortunate characteristic because the bushes are hard to eradicate from such places.

#### **Destroy the Barberry**

Every barberry bush in Canada and the United States ought to be destroyed as soon as possible. The bush is at best a second rater and has no place in a grain-growing country. Its uses as a medicinal plant has long since been discontinued and its use for esthetic purposes should be discontinued because it does not satisfy the soul's craving for beauty.

The present campaign to eradicate the bush is by no means the first one. There was a long controversy in Europe between those who considered the bush harmful and those who wanted to