NEW ENGLAND NOTE

THE OCCURRENCE OF HYBRID BARBERRY, *BERBERIS × OTTAWENSIS* (BERBERIDACEAE), IN NEW HAMPSHIRE AND RHODE ISLAND

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*Berberis ×ottawensis* C.K. Scheid is the nothospecies resulting from the hybridization of *Berberis vulgaris* L., common or European barberry, with *Berberis thunbergii* DC., Japanese barberry (Rehder 1927). The parental species, both introduced to North America (Gleason and Cronquist 1991), are considered invasive or potentially invasive in New England and the Northeast (Ehrenfeld 1997; Mehrhoff et al. 2003; Silander and Klepeis 1999; Somers et al. 2008).

Valued for its many uses, including serving as an effective hedgerow and providing medicine, food, and dyes, *B. vulgaris* was deliberately introduced to North America by European settlers as early as the 17th century (Greive 1971). During the 20th century, *B. vulgaris* was the target of an extensive federal plant eradication campaign throughout the northern Plains states due to its role as the alternate (sexual) host to *Puccinia graminis* f. sp. *tritici*, the causal agent of wheat stem rust, a globally important fungal disease (Peterson 2003). Introduced to North America in the 19th century, *B. thunbergii* was promoted initially for its ornamental value and later as a replacement for *B. vulgaris* due to its resistance to the wheat stem rust pathogen (Silander and Klepeis 1999).

In the past, the largely overlooked hybrid *B. ×ottawensis* was included in neither the Flora of North America (Whittemore 1997)