

Common Buckthorn

Rhamnus cathartica

Description: Common buckthorn was first brought to America as an ornamental hedge. It grows in a spreading, shrubby form, although it can reach up to 25 feet in height. Leaves are dark glossy green and elliptical in shape, and they usually stay green much longer than other trees in the fall. Buckthorn produces many black berries that are dispersed when consumed by birds and mammals.

Ecological Threat: Buckthorn was introduced because of its ability to grow in many different conditions and to form a thick hedge. It can quickly over-shade native herbaceous cover and prevent native tree regeneration and replaces native trees and shrubs. These characteristics contribute to habitat loss for native wildlife, erosion due to lack of native ground cover, and loss of native diversity.

Control Methods: Mechanical- Seedlings can be pulled as long as the whole root is taken out. Larger plants can be pulled using a weed wrench. Prescribed burns in spring and fall can also kill seedlings.

Chemical- Stumps can be cut and treated immediately with glyphosate. Adding dye to the herbicide will help keep track of treatment.

