

Common Buckthorn

(*Rhamnus cathartica*)

DESCRIPTION

Deciduous shrub or small tree, a common ornamental

Height: Up to 20 feet high

Leaves: Opposite, oval-elliptic shaped (1 to 2 1/2" long), jagged, toothed margins, dark glossy green on surface

Flowers: Inconspicuous, small, 4 petaled, yellowish-green, blooming May-June

Fruit: Red turning to black, 1/4" in diameter, ripening August-September

ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Seeds widely dispersed by birds; laxative properties of the fruit can be harmful to birds

Can form dense even-aged thickets in old fields, open woods and wood edges

Rapid growth rates and vigorous re-sprouting allows it to out-compete and displace native plants and reduce wildlife habitat and forage



NATIVE ALTERNATIVES

Amelanchier arborea Downy Serviceberry. Shadbush

Cercis canadensis Eastern Redbud

Chionanthus virginicus White Fringetree

Cornus florida Flowering Dogwood

Cornus racemosa Gray Dogwood

Hamamelis virginiana Common Witchhazel



CONTROL

Mechanical: Seedlings can be hand pulled. Larger plants can be dug out. Soil disturbance must be minimized to prevent re-lease of seeds in the soil. Cutting June and August for several successive years is effective.

Chemical: Mid -to-late fall glyphosate spraying on stump sprouts or seedlings. Cut to the ground Aug. to Nov. and immediately treat stumps with 20% solution of glyphosate or 25% solution of triclopyr.