

BUCKTHORN INFO SHEET

Common and Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*; *Frangula alnus*), both native to Europe and Asia, were introduced to North America in the 1800s as ornamental shrubs and hedgerow plantings. These aggressive plants have successfully invaded countless forests in the Northeast and Midwest. Often forming dense thickets, Buckthorn crowd out native plants, and are a poor food source for native wildlife.



You CAN Remove Buckthorn from Your Land

STEP 1. IDENTIFY

Common Buckthorn



Glossy Buckthorn



Common Buckthorn: Grows in a wide variety of habitats such as forests and field edges, but not wet areas. The leaf arrangement is usually sub-opposite (near opposite, but not exactly opposite), though examples of opposite and/or alternate arrangements are commonly found. The bark is dark grey with an orange inner layer (easily seen when cut). Twigs are usually tipped with a sharp spine. Leaves appear early and drop late, making spring and late fall good times to identify Buckthorn.

Glossy Buckthorn: Grows in a wide variety of habitats, including wet areas. Dark green leaves are shiny, alternate (sometime opposite) and simple with prominent venation (creases in the leaf). The bark is grey to brown with white lenticels.



STEP 2. REMOVE

Note: Buckthorn grow poorly in the deep shade of forest canopies. Buckthorn trees are perennial with a long growing season. They are most easily identified while leafed out. The best time to remove is mid to late October when the leaves have fallen from the other deciduous tree species.

Strategies for Controlling Buckthorn Bushes / Trees

Pulling and Cutting: Small plants can be pulled by hand, taking care to remove the roots along with the stem. Larger Buckthorn can be controlled by cutting at the base with a hand saw or chain saw (larger trees). A good non-chemical option to prevent regrowth is to cap the stump with a thick covering, such as a Buckthorn Baggie or empty soup can. These thick plastic bags or cans prevent the essential daylight need for resprouting and do not disturb the soil (see image below).

Wrenching: Buckthorn can be extracted from the ground using a specialized weed wrench (seen below). This method allows for removal of the entire plant, including the roots.

Girdling: Cutting a shallow, continuous ring around the trunk of large Buckthorn has been shown to effectively kill the tree. Similar to cutting and capping, this control method does not disturb the soil.



STEP 3. MONITOR

Be vigilant. Inspect the site regularly and remove any new Buckthorn growth from old seeds or resprouting from stumps near forest edges.

For more information:

Please give us a call at 802-862-4150 or visit www.lclt.org/



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