

WANTED: INVASIVE ALIEN

Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

Description: This dense Eurasian shrub/tree, grows to 22 feet. Inner bark/heartwood is yellow/orange. Tips of twigs often look like a deer's hoof with a spine (thorn) in the center. Females produce an abundance of small black berries with 3-4 seeds inside. The oval, dark green leaves stay green late into the fall. Cut stumps of buckthorn sprout vigorously.

Environmental Threat: The seeds of this tree are viable for 5 years or more. It is a poor food source for animals and has a laxative effect. In natural areas the dense canopy created by stands of buckthorn shade out understory native plants, shrubs and trees. The extensive root system of this tree can alter the hydrology of the soil. Buckthorn is difficult to control because of its seed production/viability and its ability to sprout from cut stumps.

Known Locations: Common buckthorn was and still is used as a hedge plant and is often found at property lines, and along roads. It has taken over many empty lots and natural areas where the seed has been spread by birds and other animals.

What you can do: Pull or dig small buckthorn plants, be sure to get most of the root system to prevent resprouting. Larger plants can be cut in late summer to fall and the stumps immediately painted with an herbicide to prevent sprouting. Consult a knowledgeable person before attempting to do this yourself. Be sure to take great care when using chemicals. **READ AND FOLLOW THE LABEL!**



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