

Take Back Your Woods

How to Identify Buckthorn



Common Buckthorn is Bad News!

Within a few years, this non-native, invasive shrub can take over woodlands and crowd out native wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.



Buckthorn berries ripen in late summer and stay on until mid-winter (shown near actual size).

If you want to remove buckthorn from your woodland, you first need to be able to identify it. Several native shrubs look similar, so you want to know the difference before cutting anything down. See the bottom right of this page for help identifying native shrubs.

Once you've removed buckthorn, it's important to monitor your site. Buckthorn seeds in the soil will sprout, so follow-up is essential to successful buckthorn control.

Are You Barking Up the Wrong Tree?



Orange inner bark



Spotted bark of young buckthorn

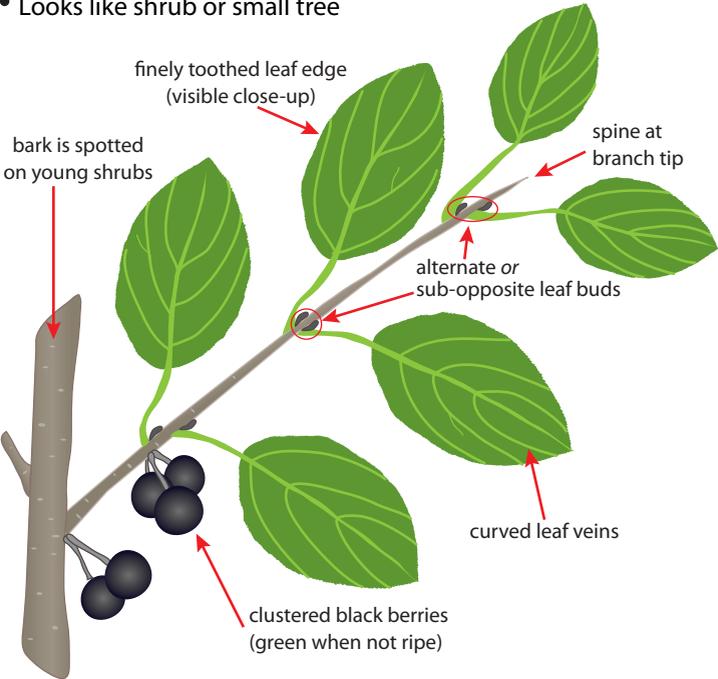
Buckthorn is easily identified by scraping off the outer bark. If the inner bark is orange or orange-yellow, it's buckthorn. Also, young buckthorn can be identified by their spotted gray-brown bark. On older buckthorn, the bark is rough with cork-like ridges.

Buckthorn Identification

- Leaves out early in spring (before most native plants)
- Leaves stay dark green and don't fall off until late fall (much later than native shrubs and trees)
- Grows up to 10-20 feet tall
- Looks like shrub or small tree



Leaves in mid-summer



Buckthorn vs. Native Shrubs



Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica*
 Flower: Yellow-green
 Ripe berries: Black



Gray Dogwood *Cornus racemosa*
 Flower: White
 Ripe berries: White



Black Cherry *Prunus serotina*
 Flower: White on long cluster
 Ripe berries: Purple-black



Chokecherry *Prunus virginiana*
 Flower: White on long cluster
 Ripe berries: Purple-black

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Buckthorn Control



As an owner of wooded property, you are a land manager. Part of being a land manager is becoming educated about your land and planning for what you'd like your woods to look like now and in the future. Controlling buckthorn is a multi-year effort that requires dedication and patience. But the many rewards are long lasting and include watching the return of wildlife to the habitat that you've created.

The best path to buckthorn control success starts with a good control strategy. Before you begin, read through the steps and tips below to make sure that you are on the right track to controlling buckthorn.



Buckthorn-invaded woodland



1 CUT

Depending on the size, you can use loppers, handsaw, or chainsaw to cut buckthorn.

- Cut buckthorn trunk near the soil surface.
- Mark stumps with wire stake flags or marking paint so that you can easily find them for herbicide treatment; or have someone follow close behind you to treat the stumps once they are cut.
- Plan to cut buckthorn when the weather is above freezing so that herbicide will be more effective.
- Woodchip cut buckthorn or haul it to a yard waste site.

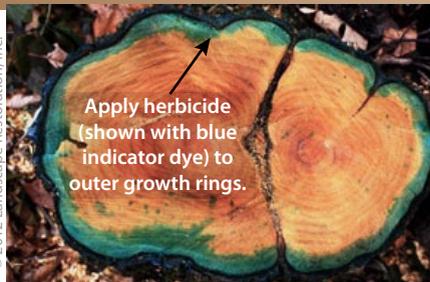


Low volume sprayer

2 TREAT

Herbicide is essential to control buckthorn. If you cut buckthorn and don't treat the stump with herbicide, it will quickly resprout.

- Use an herbicide containing at least 20% glyphosate.
- Treat stumps with herbicide within 30 minutes of cutting.
- Use herbicide that contains glyphosate; glyphosate can be used when it's above freezing (32° F).
- A dauber or low-volume sprayer works best for applying herbicide.
- Apply herbicide to the outermost growth rings (next to bark).
- Late summer through fall is the best time to cut and treat stumps (avoid April through June).
- Adding indicator dye to herbicide will add color and help you identify stumps that have already been treated (dyes are available where pesticides are sold).



Apply herbicide (shown with blue indicator dye) to outer growth rings.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT:

Glyphosate N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine, in the form of its isopropylamine salt	41.0%
OTHER INGREDIENTS (including surfactant)	59.0%
	100.0%

Look at herbicide labels. Choose one that has at least 20% glyphosate as the active ingredient.

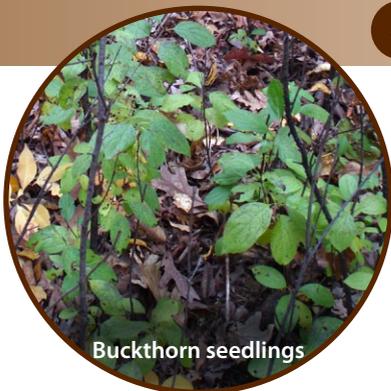


Herbicide dauber

3 FOLLOW-UP

Buckthorn seeds remain viable in the soil for up to 5 years. Follow-up control of seedlings is important on all sites.

- Hand-pull small seedlings (they won't re-sprout) or cut and treat with an herbicide dauber.
- If controlled when small, saplings can be cut and left to decompose.
- Wait and see what native plants return on their own and/or enhance the site with native seeds and plants.



Buckthorn seedlings