

WHAT CAN I REPLACE BUCKTHORN WITH?

After removing buckthorn, it is important to replace it with a native species of shrub or tree to help keep buckthorn from regaining a foothold. The following is a list of species that can be used in both woodlands and backyards to provide habitat for wildlife and to provide screening from adjacent properties.

High-bush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)



This multi-stemmed bush provides spring flowers, later turning into red berries that provide food for many bird species. This species can be left un-pruned to grow tall or may be pruned into a hedge.

Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)



Chokecherry develops into a tall shrub providing bright berries that make a delicious jelly and are an important wildlife food source.

American hazelnut (*Corylus Americana*)



This shrub grows in dry to moist woodlands. It produces large nuts that are edible for humans and are loved by many types of animals.

Grey dogwood (*Cornus racemosa*)



Commonly forms thickets at woodland edges, streambanks, and savannas. It tolerates a variety of soil types and grows great on slopes. It also provides nesting habitat for birds.

Nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*)

Nannyberry is a tall shrub that grows from a central clump. It can form thickets that provide wildlife habitat and its blue fruits are sweet and edible.



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BUCKTHORN: IS IT IN MY BACKYARD? WHAT CAN I DO?

A guide to assist property owners in identifying and managing buckthorn in woodlands and landscapes.



Anoka County Parks and a crew from the Minnesota Conservation Corps team up to remove buckthorn in Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park.

BUCKTHORN IS QUICKLY INVADING OUR FORESTS AND SOON WILL DISPLACE OUR NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS.

BUCKTHORN'S HISTORY

Buckthorn is not a native species to the United States. European buckthorn and glossy buckthorn are the two species found in Minnesota. While both species are native to Europe, they were brought to the United States in the mid-1800s to be used in landscapes and as hedgerows. It quickly became evident that both species spread rapidly and could not be contained. Buckthorn rapidly spread to woodlands, wetlands, parks, roadsides, and yards taking over as the dominant plant. With no natural insects or diseases to control buckthorn populations, it has quickly outcompeted native species, degrading the overall quality of natural habitat.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Buckthorn:

- Out competes native plants for nutrients, light, and moisture.
- Degrades wildlife habitat.
- Threatens the future of forests, wetlands, and other natural habitats.
- Contributes to erosion by shading out plants that grow on the forest floor.
- Forms an impenetrable layer of vegetation.
- Creates messy fruits that stain sidewalks and driveways.
- Lacks 'natural controls' like insects or disease that would curb its growth.



BUCKTHORN HAS BEEN DECLARED A RESTRICTED NOXIOUS WEED.

IS BUCKTHORN IN MY BACKYARD?

European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)
Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)

Habitat: Woodlands, savannahs, wetlands, river banks, and roadsides. Both will grow in full sun and in full shade.

Leaves: Egg-shaped (European buckthorn) or oval (glossy buckthorn) with finely toothed edges: dark green, dull to glossy. Leaves stay green into late autumn / early winter.



Stems: European Buckthorn buds are opposite and may have a sharp thorn at the tip of the twig. Glossy buckthorn buds are alternate, no thorn at the tips of the twig.



Fruit: Arranged in large clusters, round dark blue to black berries. Berries are eaten by birds and other animals during winter. Once eaten, the seeds within the berries are carried by the animals and deposited wherever the animal goes. Seeds can last for up to five years in the soil.

Bark and Wood: Bark is shiny, almost silver in color. Has a scaly appearance in older trees. Wood is orange in color.



HOW DO I GET RID OF BUCKTHORN?

Removing seedlings and small plants

Buckthorn plants have generally small and shallow root systems. Because of this, seedlings the size of your finger or smaller can usually be pulled up roots and all. Plants up to two inches in diameter can also be pulled from the ground but generally you will need to apply leverage using a tool such as a weed wrench to pull them. You can also loosen the soil around the base of these trees with a shovel to make removal easier.



Removing large buckthorn plants



Plants larger than two inches in diameter are generally too large to pull the entire root system out of the ground. In this case, the best way to remove it is to cut the tree as close to the ground as possible and apply an herbicide within two hours to the cut surface to prevent it from re-sprouting. Herbicides containing Triclopyr such as Garlon 3 or Ortho Brush-B-Gon are most effective and can be applied with a paint brush or sponge applicator.