

## Background:

Common buckthorn was introduced to North America from Eurasia in the mid 1800s as an ornamental shrub often used in hedges. Common buckthorn grows in full sun and dense shade, allowing it to invade woodland, savannas, prairies, abandoned fields, pastures and roadsides.



Common Buckthorn Tree

# Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

## Impact on Native Habitat:

Common buckthorn readily invades natural communities, including woodlands, savannas and prairies. It produces dense shade, which helps it to outcompete many native herbs. Once established, common buckthorn displaces native shrubs and trees in the mid-layer of the woodland where many bird species nest. It forms an impenetrable layer of vegetation that further degrades wildlife habitat.

## Identification

### Leaves:

Egg-shaped, pointed at the tip, smooth, dark, glossy and finely-toothed. 3-5 pair of curved leaf veins. Leaves stay green late into fall..



### Stems:

Buds and leaves are sub-opposite, opposite, or alternate. Twigs often end in small (<1/4") sharp, stout thorns.



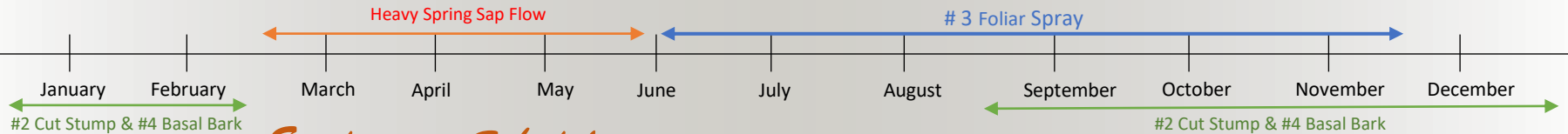
### Flowers:

In spring, fragrant paired tubular 1 inch long flowers with narrow petals appear. These flowers are white or sometimes pink but become yellowish as the flowers age



### Fruit:

Small clusters of berry-like, 1/4" fruit. Ripens progressively from a distinctive red-brown to a dark purple in August and September. Each berry has 2 to 3 seeds.



## How to Kill: Eradication

- 1. Hand pulling-** When the plant is small and the soil is moist, hand pulling is an option if the entire plant can be removed, including the roots. This is a very labor intensive method, requiring surveying the same acreage year after year to pull the re-sprouts.
- 2. Cut Stump method-** This involves cutting the stem(s) off near ground level and applying (painting) a 50% concentration, by volume, of Glyphosate solution with a brush to thoroughly cover the freshly cut area.

**3. Foliar spray-** This involves spraying the leaves with a solution of properly labeled herbicide plus a non-ionic surfactant, which improves the chemicals ability to adhere and absorb into the plant. This method should be used during the active growing season so care should be taken to avoid spraying non-target species.

**4. Basal Bark Method-** This consists of spraying a mixture of properly labeled herbicide plus basal oil to the bush's stems to a height of 12 to 15 inches from ground level. Thorough wetting is necessary for good control. (This method is effective but shouldn't be used in the spring while the leaves are emerging and sap is flowing upward in stems.)



Cut stump method applied to common buckthorn