

**INVADER:
COMMON
BUCKTHORN**

Rhamnus cathartica



Traits for ID:

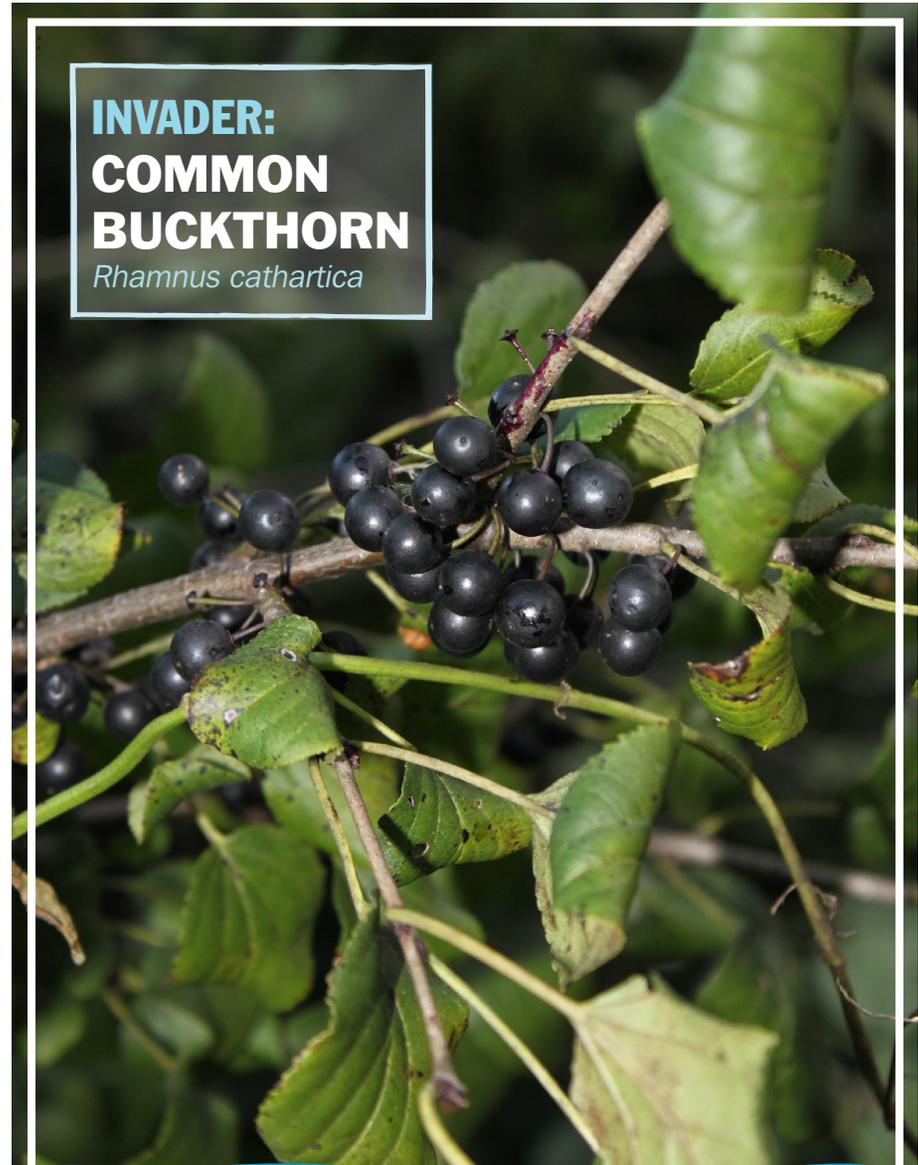
- woody shrub, 10-25' tall
- oval leaves with 3-5 curving veins
- leaves stay green into late autumn

Where it grows:

- forests + woodlands
- savannas
- fields + roadsides
- shade or sun
- almost everywhere

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What's the problem with buckthorn?

Buckthorn isn't inherently bad.

For thousands of years, buckthorn evolved in Europe alongside pests and pathogens we don't have. Without its familiar foes here, buckthorn thrives. In fact, it throws serious shade — it leafs out early and keeps its leaves late. That means that from spring to fall, other plants have a harder time reaching the light and buckthorn can easily take over.

A forest works best when it's shared.

Buckthorn bumps out other plants: plants that help hold soil in place, plants where birds nest, plants that make up vibrant, interconnected habitat. Here in Minnesota, buckthorn overgrowth causes habitat breakdown, erosion of soil into waterways, the spread of plant diseases and more.

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT BUCKTHORN

- 1 Know what grows in your yard**
Got buckthorn? Use resources like www.MinnesotaWildflowers.info online or enlist your local botany enthusiast to make sure you've identified it correctly.
- 2 Get rid of your buckthorn**
Hack back fruiting branches. Dig up roots. To prevent regrowth, treat or use baggies to cover remaining stumps. You can even consider prescribed fire or goats to get rid of young plants.
- 3 Stop the spread**
Industrial composters get hot enough to sterilize seedy buckthorn berries; check to see if your city accepts them. And make sure to brush off your boots after walking through areas with buckthorn.
- 4 Follow up (for five years!)**
Pull seedlings and young buckthorn growth. Diverse native plants can compete with buckthorn seedlings, so planting for habitat and wildlife has yet another benefit.
- 5 Volunteer with FMR**
Don't have your own yard? Want to do more? Join us for a buckthorn bust. Find out how at www.fmr.org/volunteer.

Friends of the Mississippi River engages citizens to protect, restore and enhance the Mississippi River and its watershed in the Twin Cities region.



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Saint Paul, MN 55101
651-222-2193
www.fmr.org • info@fmr.org

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