WEED of the MONTH

Autumn Olive, *Elaeagnus umbellata*

ODNR Division of Forestry
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Autumn Olive is a deciduous shrub that grows to about 20 feet. It is easily recognized by the silvery, dotted underside of the leaves. Leaves are alternate and smooth. Small yellowish flowers are abundant and fragrant. They occur in clusters in May to June. Fruits form in the fall and are red, juicy and edible. They ripen from September to November. Autumn olive invades fields, pastures, woodland edges and other disturbed areas. It can form a dense shrub layer with displaces native species. Autumn olive is native to China and Japan and was introduced into North American in 1830. Since then it has been widely planted for mine reclamation, wildlife food and shelterbelts.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

The US Forest Service states that autumn olive has the potentials to become one of the most damaging shrubs in the eastern and central US. It exhibits prolific fruiting and rapid growth that suppresses native plants. It is widely disseminated by birds which makes it one of the fast spreading invasive. Due to its nitrogen-fixing capabilities, it has the capacity to affect the nitrogen cycle of native communities.

AT THE WILDS in Muskingum County, autumn olive has spread across the thousands of acres of reclaimed strip mine land. It grows densely along utility wires, evidence of birds eating and excreting the seeds.

HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES

It grows well in a variety of soils including sandy, loams and clay. Autumn olive has nitrogen-fixing root nodules with allow it to thrive in even the poorest of solids. It can tolerate some shade, but produces more in full sun. It does not do well in well stocked forests or wet areas. It is drought tolerant and invades grasslands and open woodlands. It is becoming common in disturbed areas, roadsides, pastures and reclaimed areas.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Seedlings and sprouts can be hand-pulled with the soil is moist to insure removal of the roots system. On larger plants cutting alone results in

thicker, more dense re-growth. Burning during the dormant season also results in vigorous re-sprouting.

It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate (RoundUp). Foliar application has proven effective in controlling these species. Since glyphosate is a nonselective herbicide it will affect all green vegetation with which it comes into contact. Care should be taken to avoid contacting native species. Glyphosate herbicides are recommended because they break down in the soil more quickly than other chemicals. Follow label and Federal and State requirements.

USE PESTICIDES WISELY: ALWAYS READ THE ENTIRE PESTICIDE LABEL CAREFULLY, FOLLOW ALL MIXING AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS AND WEAR ALL RECOMMENDED PERSONAL PROTECTIVE GEAR AND CLOTHING. CONTACT YOUR STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR ANY ADDITIONAL PESTICIDE USE REQUIREMENTS, RESTRICTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

For information on how to identify and control Autumn Olive or how to better manage your trees, contact the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry at 614-265-6366.