

WEED of the MONTH

Burning Bush, *Euonymus alatus*

ODNR Division of Forestry

740-589-9910 or 614-265-6366

Contact annemarie.smith@dnr.state.oh.us or ann.bonner@dnr.state.oh.us



Burning Bush is a deciduous shrub that grows to 10-20 feet tall and wide. It invades forests and natural areas throughout the eastern US. Corky ridges appear along young stems. The opposite, dark green leaves are smooth, rounded and persist into fall with a bright red to purple color. Spring flowers are inconspicuous, but the autumn fruit are bright red capsules that split to reveal orange fleshy seeds. Burning bush can invade a variety of sites including high quality woodland. Once established, it forms dense thickets that displace native species. Burning bush is native to Asia and was first introduced into the US in the 1860's for its marked fall color. It continues to be sold and planted as an ornamental.

WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

It has been widely planted as an ornamental for its spectacular red autumn foliage, fruits and for its tolerance to salt. It spreads

from seed, is dispersed by birds and colonizes by root suckers. It thrives in the shade where it displaces spring wildflowers and other natives. It is a very adaptable plant and can thrive in a variety of sites.

IN THE CITY OF ATHENS' SELLS PARK, a large thicket of burning bush fills a valley. The suspected parent plants are in nearby yards. It has crowded out all other species of trees, shrubs and herbs.

HABITAT IN THE UNITED STATES

It can be found in open woods, well stocked forests, prairies, pastures and roadsides. It is very adaptable. As opposed to many non-native invasive species, burning bush can thrive in shade and in undisturbed sites. Several native species of *Euonymus* exhibit the appealing characteristics of burning bush, but are not invasive and would be a better alternative.



MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Seedlings and young plants can be hand-pulled when the soil is moist to insure removal of the roots system. The shallow and fibrous root systems can be removed with a spading fork and pulled with a weed wrench. On larger plants cutting alone results in thicker, more dense re-growth. Cutting should be followed painting the stump with a mild herbicide.

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It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate (RoundUp), triclopyr or imazapyr. Foliar application has proven effective in controlling these species, but require more chemical. By cutting the shrubs and painting the stumps, this shrub can be controlled. 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 Burning Bush or how to better manage your trees, contact the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry at 614-265-6366.