

GLOSSY BUCKTHORN

[*Frangula alnus* Mill.]

FRAL4



Fig. 1

UGA 5274031

Problem: Native to Europe,^{4,6,7} Asia and North Africa,^{1,3} glossy buckthorn (Fig. 1) was introduced as an ornamental pre 1800s.² This species invades wetlands in its non-native range creating dense thickets that out-compete and exclude native woody and herbaceous plant species (Fig. 2).⁵

Habit: Deciduous shrub or small tree, to 7 m (23 ft) tall.⁶

Reproduction: Sexually by seed.⁴

Leaves: Mostly alternate, oblong to obovate, entire, 5-8 cm (2 to 3 in) long; ^{4,6,7} glossy above, glabrous to pubescent below.³

Stems: Slender, reddish-brown, with gray pubescence on newer growth; 3 bundle scars; on older bark, prominent lenticels on older growth; naked or scaleless hairy buds (Fig. 3);⁸ side twigs often sharp and pointed.⁸

Flowers: May-June;⁷ small, greenish-white, perfect, 5 parts, clustered in flat-topped umbels.^{4,6,7}



Fig. 2

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Fig. 3 Chris Mattrick, USFS

Fruits/Seeds: Ripen July-September;⁷ fruits turn from red to black^{6,7} (Fig. 4) and contain 2 ungrooved seeds.⁴



Fig. 4

UGA 1261060

Habitat: Aggressively colonizes wet habitats, roadsides, fence rows, and fields.^{3,7}

Similar Species: Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* L.) has sub-opposite branching (Fig. 5), leaves have serrated margins unlike glossy buckthorn,^{3,7} and more notably, twigs may be tipped with a sharp stout thorn. Buds are dark brown to black, scaled and in many cases, appear to sandwich the thorn at the terminal tip of the twig (Fig. 6). Similar native buckthorn species can also cause confusion.



Fig. 5

UGA 0008306

Lance-leaf buckthorn (*R. lanceolata* Pursh) has lanceolate leaves, scaled buds, and reaches heights of 1 to 2 m tall (3 to 6 ft).^{6,7} Alderleaf buckthorn (*R. alnifolia* L'Hér.) generally occurs in swamps and bogs,^{4,6,7} only reaches heights of 1 m (3 ft), and has scaled buds.^{6,7} Carolina buckthorn (*R.*



Fig. 6

UGA 1334007

caroliniana Walter) has serrated leaves that are glabrous on both sides and has a more southern distribution.^{4,6}