

## CARP Factsheet

### INVASIVE ALIEN PLANT: The Showy Shrubs

**COMMON NAME:** Glossy Buckthorn & Common Buckthorn

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Rhamnus frangula* & *Rhamnus cathartica*

**PLANT TYPE:** Woody Shrub or Small Tree

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Form – shrub or small tree

Height – up to 7m

Leaves – simple, alternate, oval, smooth (Glossy) or finely toothed (Common)

Flowers – in clusters, greenish-yellow, small regular flowers, 5 petals (Glossy) or 4 petals (Common)

Fruit – berries, red turning to black when ripe, each containing 3-4 seeds

Blooms in – spring through fall

Other Features – Common Buckthorn may have small spines at twig tips; keeps foliage, flowers, and berries longer than most native shrubs (long growing season)

**ORIGIN:** Europe and Asia

**INTRODUCED (before 1800) FOR:** ornamental, hedgerows

**HABITAT:** many habitat types, both will occur in forest understories - Glossy in wetter, less shaded areas than Common

**MEANS OF SPREAD:** bird-dispersed seed, and re-sprouting of cut stumps

**PROBLEMS:**

- very prolific seed has potential for long-range spread by birds, making control difficult
- potential to invade forest understories, and prevent regeneration of native species

**IF YOU HAVE THIS PLANT ON YOUR PROPERTY:**

- remove it promptly, and do not put it in your back yard composter (dry and burn, or regular garbage)
- cut or dig individual plants before they go to seed; cut stumps will re-sprout in the same growing season
- prolific seed production means you'll be pulling out seedlings for years to come!



Photos: Plant with Fruit (*R. frangula*) – Heather Stewart, Applied Geomatics Research Group (AGRG), Plant with Flower (*R. cathartica*) – Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)