

# Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus carthartica*)

In Norwich, Glossy Buckthorn is more problematic than Common. They are the first shrubs to leaf out in early Spring—which is a good time to eradicate it if you struggle with plant ID.

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## **Glossy Buckthorn:**

**Leaves:** oval, wavy, entire margins, with 5 – 9 veins.

**Fruit:** red (young) to blue-black (ripe)

**Bark:** brown-gray with white dots

**Roots:** Yellow

## **Common Buckthorn:**

**Leaves:** ovate, toothed margins, 3-5 veins almost parallel to margin.

**Fruit:** green (young) to black (ripe).

**Bark:** grey-black, orange underneath

## **Natural History:**

- Shrubs or small trees from Eurasia that were widely planted in the 1800s as ornamentals, windbreaks, etc.
- These Class B noxious weeds invade forests/edges, fields, disturbed areas, road sides, and wetlands.

## **Ecological Impacts:**

- Dense growth habit shades out spring wildflowers.
- Displaces native plants and lowers species richness.
- Alters habitat & is a poor food source for native fauna.
- Alternate host for Oat Rust and Alfalfa Mosaic Virus.

## **Reproduction & Spread:**

- Sprouts from stumps, roots, and vegetative fragments.
- Fruit has a laxative effect on fauna amplifying seed dispersal.
- Seed banks(> 500 seeds/m<sup>2</sup> of soil) persist 2 – 6 years.

## **Control Methods:**

- Hand pull seedlings and *all* roots.
- Use a weed wrench on saplings.
- Burn or hang dead plants, never compost them.
- Girdle trees (may kill in ±2 years).
- Cut tree, paint stump (herbicide).



Glossy Buckthorn



Common Buckthorn