

Invasive Species

Taxonomic Name: *Rhamnus cathartica*

Common Name: *European Buckthorn*

Physical Description:

Growth Type: *Rhamnus cathartica* is a shrub to small tree growing up to 22 ft high with a 10 inch trunk. The mature plants growth is spreading and irregular. The branches usually have shoots which are tipped with stout spines.

Leaves: The leaves are broadly oval with 3 to four pairs of upcurved veins. They are arranged opposite to sub-opposite, and are 1.5 to 3.5 inches long. The margins are jagged, like a saw tooth. The upper parts of the leaves are dark and glossy green, while the bottoms are a lighter shade. The leaves stay green and on the plant later into the fall than most other deciduous trees.

Flowers: The flowers are pale green to yellow with four petals. They emerge from the stems in clusters near the bases of the leaf stalks.

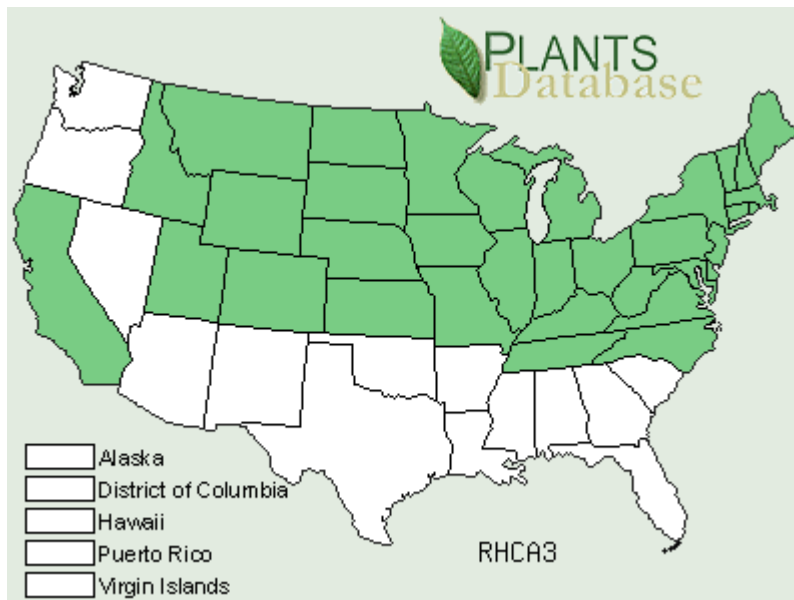
Fruit: In the fall small black fruits form containing 3-4 seeds.

Bark: Gray to brown, and rough textured. Inner bark is yellow and the core heartwood pink to orange.



Invasive Nature: *Rhamnus cathartica* is a dioecious plant, meaning each plant produces only male and female flowers. Only the female plant produces fruit. Most the fruit falls beneath the plant creating a thick under story of seedlings. *Rhamnus cathartica*'s fruit, when eaten by birds produces a severe laxative effect, helping to distribute the seeds great distances. It is also tolerant of almost any soil type, and can quickly suffocate native plants and herbs. The dense growth of seedlings prevents the regeneration of native species. This growth of seedlings also affects fire adapted ecosystems because a lack of under vegetation prevents the fires which perpetuate the growth of native species.

Coverage Area:



Sources:

<http://www.issg.org/database/image.asp?ii=1333&ic=e>

<http://www.hort.uconn.edu/Plants/r/rhacat/rhacat1.html>

<http://www.cnr.vt.edu/DENDRO/dendrology/Syllabus2/factsheet.cfm?ID=559>

<http://flogaus-faust2.de/photo/rhamcar0.jpg>

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/rhca1.htm>

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=RHCA3>