

# CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

## *Invasive Plant Fact Sheet*

### European Black Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)



**Family name:** Birch family (*Betulaceae*)

**Native range:** Eurasia

**General:** Deciduous tree reaching 65 feet. Trunk is often multi-stemmed. The bark is smooth and dark brown, but can show some shallow fissures with age.

**Leaves:** Leathery, coarsely or irregularly doubly toothed. Broadly round, about 1-3.5 inches long and 1-3 inches wide. Young leaves are coated in resin. The leaves of this plant persist late into the fall.

**Flowers:** The inconspicuous flowers appear in April before leaf out.

**Fruit:** The catkins are sticky, with the male and female catkins growing in clusters of 2-5. The hard fruits are egg-shaped with short, narrow wings and measure 0.5-1 inches long and 0.5 inches wide. Ripening in October to November. Seeds are easily carried via water.

**Look-alikes:** Speckled alder (*Alnus incana*), hazel alder (*A. serrulata*) and green alder (*A. viridis*) are natives. European black alder is a tree and can grow much bigger than the native shrubs. European black alder has similar leaves, flowers and fruits to the native bush alder species. European black alder leaves are rarely tapered at the point.

**Habitat:** Found in a variety of wetland habitats, including forest, shrub, and open habitats. European black alder can successfully colonize on poor soils.

**Threats to native habitats:** The fast growing European black alder can form large thickets that displace native plants and prevent successional growth of native trees and shrubs.



**NJ Status:** European black alder is uncommon, but is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

**Commercial Availability:** European black alder is planted in landscaping and gardens.

Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture Images: <http://www.forestryimages.org/>  
<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specield=36>  
Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. *Plants of Pennsylvania*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 610.  
<http://www.wikipedia.org>



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, [www.fohvos.org](http://www.fohvos.org) or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, [www.urwa.org](http://www.urwa.org).

