

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Common Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

Also called: European buckthorn



Family name: Buckthorn family (Rhamnaceae)

Native range: Europe

General: Small deciduous tree or shrub reaching 20 feet. The branches are smooth, some ending in spines.

Leaves: Opposite or nearly so, finely toothed, oval to elliptical, shiny above. Lateral veins (usually 3, but can be 2 or 4) on each side of the midvein are strongly upcurved. Leaf drop occurs late in autumn.

Flowers: Small, yellow-green, 4 petaled are

borne in clusters of 2 to 6 near the leaf axils. Flowers bloom from May through June as leaves begin to appear.

Fruit: Round, 0.25 inches across, dark purple to black, containing 3 to 4 seeds. Appearing in fall.

Look-alikes: Glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) is a non-native invasive tree from Europe. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Habitat: Forest, open forest, meadow, field, thicket, roadside. Especially aggressive in wet soils.



Threats to native habitats: The fast growing common buckthorn can form large, dense stands thickets that displace native plants and prevent successional growth of native trees and shrubs.



NJ Status: Common buckthorn is uncommon but spreading rapidly. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

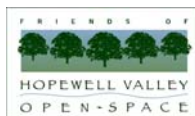
Commercial Availability: Not found.

Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture

Images: <http://www.forestryimages.org/>

<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. *Plants of Pennsylvania*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 655.



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 or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

