

## Glossy Buckthorn

### **What is it?**

Glossy buckthorn is a deciduous shrub native to a wide swath of land that includes Northern Africa, Western Europe, Western Asia, and portions of the Middle East. It can reach up to 18' tall, with shiny, un-toothed oval leaves. Glossy buckthorn grows small white flower clusters and pea-sized berries that ripen from green to red/dark purple during the June to September season.

### **Why is it a problem?**

Glossy buckthorn was introduced to the Northeastern United States and Canada approximately 200 years ago, and it has been increasing its range consistently ever since. It is a very hardy and adaptable plant that grows in dense clusters and crowds out native species. It generally thrives in well-lit spots located within forest canopies, a niche that would normally be filled with native tree and plant species. In the city of Portage many of our public park areas, and our fragile wetlands in particular, are under constant siege from the abundance of glossy buckthorn that is attempting to take over areas once occupied by native plants. Glossy buckthorn can also act as a host and transmission vector for viruses and funguses that can damage other native plant life, as well as potentially acting as a host for soybean aphids.

### **What controls can be utilized to limit/prevent outbreaks?**

The methods for controlling glossy buckthorn infestations are difficult but straight-forward. The plant can be pulled by the roots or cut at the base and then treated with either an herbicide or a natural control method to prevent or inhibit re-growth. Natural control methods include placing a black bag or a tin can over a cut stem to prevent the plant from returning. For larger areas, controlled burning can be an effective means of mitigation as well. Once an area has been cleared of glossy buckthorn, aggressive re-planting of desirable native trees and plant species can inhibit and slow the return of this invasive plant.

### **Summary**

Glossy buckthorn infestations can have a deleterious effect on fragile ecosystems, while also destroying the natural beauty found in our public parks and natural areas. Educating the community can go a long way towards preventing small-scale local infestations, while larger infestations of the plant usually require a community approach to removal and prevention. For further information, the Michigan State University Department of Forestry has several publicly available resources for further research and consideration. The presence of an infestation can be reported via the <https://www.michigan.gov/invasives> website or via their app which can be downloaded from <http://www.misin.msu.edu/tools/apps/#home>. For further information, you can visit <https://www.michigan.gov/invasives> or <https://www.invasive.org>.

**Pictured Below (from top to bottom)**

- Glossy Buckthorn Overview Image
- Glossy Buckthorn, Mature Plant
- Glossy Buckthorn, Leaves and Berries



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