Description

- Eurasian native shrub or small tree introduced to North America as an ornamental, for fence rows, and wildlife habitat; can grow to 22 feet tall.
- Dark green, alternate, leaves are oval, toothed with up curved veins, rounded or pointed tips.
- Gray to black bark with yellow inner bark; heartwood is orange; thorn on many branch tips.
- Flowers are yellow-green with four petals; male and female flowers develop on different plants.
- Black, ¼ inch fruit form in the fall; fruit falls close to parent creating dense even-aged thickets; fruit has laxative effect to help distribution of seeds by birds.
- Similar to Glossy Buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), which is also exotic to North America and has glossy, smooth margined leaves with hairy undersides and no thorn tipped twigs.

Impacts

- Becomes dominant mid- to under-story shrub because of large seed productions forming dense, even-aged thickets near parent, shading out native plants.
- Eastern native buckthorns are easily confused with exotics, Carolina Buckthorn (*Rhamnus caroliniana*) and Alder Buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*) both have finely toothed leaves with smooth underside and red to black fruit.

Control

- Prescribed fire is effective in controlling buckthorn seedlings, though several annual fires for areas of heavy infestation are needed.
- Herbicide application can control buckthorn; applying herbicide to freshly cut stumps is also an effective control method.
- Healthy populations of native plants must then be established to keep buckthorn re-sprouts from re-infesting the area.