

Buckthorn Management

Buckthorn management is one of the toughest challenges facing the tree care industry. Buckthorn is an extremely invasive tree or shrub that has been displacing our urban forests and wetlands for many years. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for our buckthorn dilemma. Buckthorn management is a long term and often costly endeavor. Management plans need to be in place on all levels including homeowners, municipalities, and urban foresters working together to halt the buckthorn invasion.

What's wrong with buckthorn?

Competes with native plants for light, space, and nutrients

Seeds may persist in the soil for up to 6 years before germinating

Has chemicals in its roots, leaves, and fruit that inhibit the growth of other plants

Are vigorous trees that are difficult to kill, even with herbicides

Creates a monoculture as it invades an area, decreasing diversity of plant communities and wildlife habitat



1

Remove the medium and large buckthorn trees. Stumps must be ground out or treated chemically. Fall is an optimum time to begin this phase.

2

Pull or spray smaller seedlings.

3

Once removed, there will be a flush of new growth. Pull or spray new seedlings. This phase could last several years.

4

Replanting may be necessary if the buckthorn has displaced native plants in the area. Established native plants will make it more difficult for buckthorn to reinvade making them a crucial part of the restoration process.

Common buckthorn was added to the "Restricted Noxious Weed List" in 1999 and can no longer be sold. Glossy buckthorn was added to the list in 2001.

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