

Identifying Buckthorn-

One of the most important steps in removing buckthorn is figuring out whether or not you have it on your property! Identifying buckthorn is pretty easy. If you think it looks like buckthorn, it probably is.

There are two species of buckthorn in the area and this page will go through how to identify them at different stages of growth.

General Appearance-

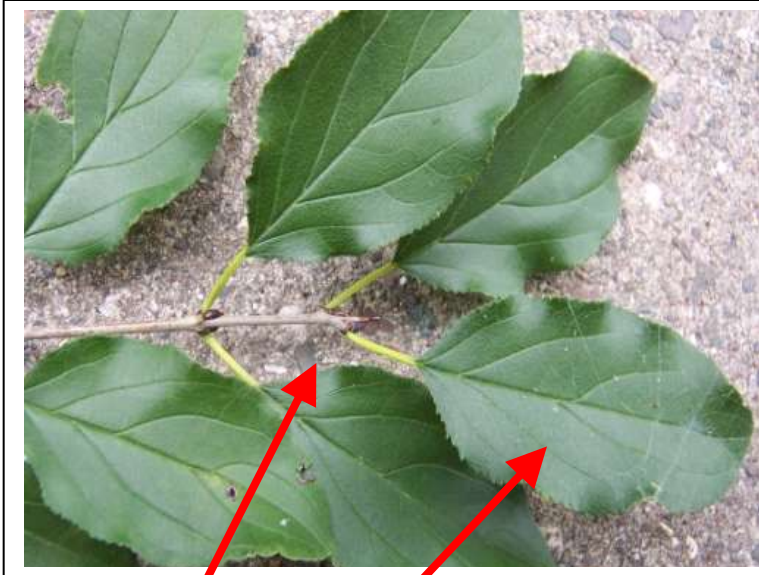


Common Buckthorn underneath mature oaks

Buckthorn leaves out earlier in spring and holds its leaves much later in fall than other trees or shrubs

Leaves and Berries-

Common Buckthorn
(most common)



Glossy leaves with deep, prominent leaf veins. Leaf edged with small teeth

Leaves almost directly across from each other, thorn at tip of twig

Glossy Buckthorn
(wet areas)



Similar to Common Buckthorn, leaves extremely glossy with deep veins and leaf margin is smooth, without teeth

Common Buckthorn berries



Glossy Buckthorn berries



Bark and Trunk (similar in both buckthorn species) -



Bark is gray and changes with age. Young trees or smaller branches have smooth to slightly flakey bark and older trees and large branches have very flakey bark



Smaller saplings or twigs are mostly gray and smooth with small raised white cork like bumps



Cut bark exposes yellow sapwood and orange heartwood

Seedlings –

Don't worry about the small seedlings if you still have larger buckthorn around. But when you have the big stuff under control, you will want to keep an eye out for any seedlings that try to come back. It's a lot less work to pull out a seedling than to cut down a mature buckthorn!



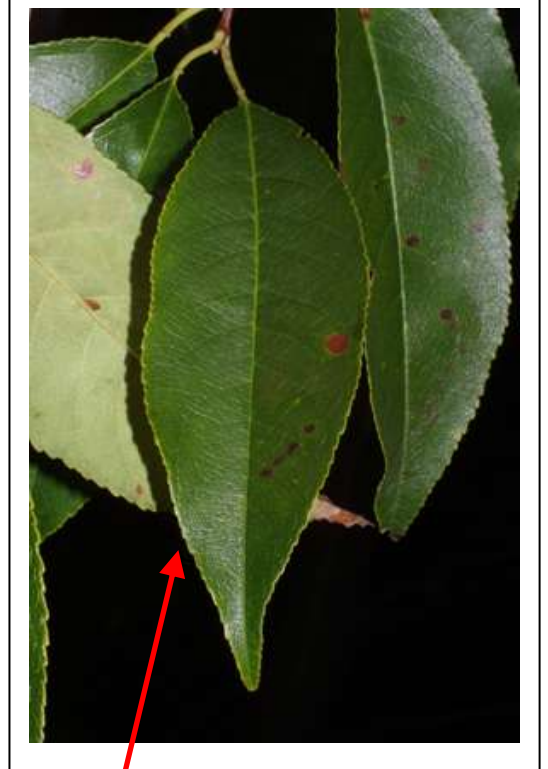
Buckthorn Look a Likes-

One of the most common trees mistaken for buckthorn is mature black cherry. This is mainly due to the similarities between mature buckthorn bark and mature cherry bark.

Black Cherry



Bark appears cracked and segmented, versus the peeled appearance of the bark on large buckthorns. Black Cherry is a taller tree that doesn't generally send out any branches until it reaches the canopy. Buckthorn usually will have at least a few branches that you can reach from the ground.



Leaves are much longer and skinnier than buckthorn leaves, lack prominent veins