

Target Invasive Species

Burning Bush *Euonymus alata*



Description

Burning bush, or winged spindletree, grows as a deciduous shrub or small tree to around 12 feet tall. It has inconspicuous yellow-green flowers in the spring. Corky ridges form along the green twigs, giving the branches a winged appearance. The leaves are opposite and are elliptical in shape with toothed

margins. It is called burning bush because its leaves turn bright red to purplish red in the fall, and the seeds are contained in red or purple fruits. The fruits are dispersed by birds.



Habitat

Burning bush is frequent in rich woodlands over trap rock, shale, and limestone. It also grows in alluvial soils in flood plain forests and along stream banks.

Threats

Burning bush replaces native shrubs in some woodland habitats and alters the structure of natural plant communities. Open woodlands and flood plain forests are particularly vulnerable, but upland forests are also invaded.

Control

Small plants can be pulled if soil conditions are right. Larger plants should be cut after mid-summer and triclopr or glyphosate applied to the cambium layer of the stump. If the plant re-sprouts a diluted glyphosate can be sprayed on the new foliage with care not to spray near-by, desired plants. Foliar spray can be applied in early summer for large populations. Herbicides should be used in accordance with New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection guidelines.



Suggested Alternative Plants

Highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), Black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) are all native alternatives to *Euonymus alata*. For a list of additional native shrubs, visit www.bbg.org/nativealternatives.

Sources: An Overview of Nonindigenous Plant Species in New Jersey, New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection Natural and Historic Resources Group Parks and Forestry. www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/natural/invasivereport.pdf.
Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants, C. Colston Burrell, Brooklyn Botanic Garden All-Region Guides, 2006.
Photographs of twigs are both by James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, United States <http://www.invasive.org/>.
Photograph of the foliage in fall courtesy of The Dow Gardens Archives, Dow Gardens, United States, <http://www.invasive.org/>.