

# OHIO'S MOST WANTED INVASIVE SPECIES

## Autumn olive, *Elaeagnus umbellata*

Autumn-olive is a fast-growing shrub or small tree reaching up to 20 feet tall. Its leaves are small and oval, dark green on the upper surface and silvery below. Small coppery dots occur on stems and leaves. This shrub has light yellow, aromatic flowers and produces large quantities of small, round red fruits that are readily eaten and spread by birds.



**Buckthorn**

Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Bugwood.com

**Buckthorn**, *Rhamnus frangula*, *Rhamnus cathartica*. Known in some parts as *Glossy (or Shining)*, *Common (or European)*

Buckthorns are tall shrubs or small trees that grow up to 20 feet tall. The smooth, gray-to-brown bark is distinctively spotted. Glossy buckthorn has shiny leaves with smooth edges. It has solitary red-to-purple, berry-like fruits. Common buckthorn has black fruits and dull green, smooth leaves. Both species are abundant seed producers.



**Multiflora Rose**

Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Bugwood.com

**Multiflora rose**, *Rosa multiflora*

Multiflora rose is a dense, spreading shrub with widely arching canes and stiff, curved thorns. This shrub grows up to 15 feet tall with alternate, compound leaves of seven to nine oval leaflets. Multiflora rose has numerous white flowers that produce clusters of small, red fruits. The fruits (called hips) are eaten by birds and mammals, which help disperse the seeds. An individual plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds per year!



**Amur Honeysuckle**

Photo by Chuck Bargeron, Bugwood.com

**Amur honeysuckle**, *Lonicera maackii*, *Lonicera tatarica*, *Lonicera morrowii*, *Tatarian*, or *Morrow's honeysuckle*

These upright shrubs can grow 6-15 feet in height with dark green, egg-shaped leaves. The tubular flowers are white on the Amur and the Morrow's (changing to yellow with age), and pink on the Tatarian. Berries range from red to orange, occasionally yellow, and are eaten and dispersed by birds.



**Japanese Knotweed**

Photo by James H. Miller, Bugwood.com

**Japanese knotweed**, *Polygonum cuspidatum*

This shrub-like herb grows up to 10 feet tall. Stems are smooth and the pointed leaves vary from broadly oval to almost triangular. Flowers are greenish-white and very small. The seeds are dispersed by wind. Once established, the plants spread by a system of underground stems reaching 60 feet.

**Reed canarygrass**, *Phalaris arundinacea*

This large, coarse grass reaches 2-5 feet tall. The hairless stems gradually taper to flat and rough leaf blades 3-10 inches long. The flowers occur in dense clusters and are green to purple, changing to beige and becoming more open over time. The plant spreads aggressively both by seed and by forming a thick system of underground stems (rhizomes).



**Reed Canary Grass**  
Photo by Chris Evans, Bugwood.com



**Common Reed**

Photo by John M. Randall, Bugwood.com

**Common reed**, *Phragmites australis*

Common reed, or *Phragmites*, is a grass that reaches up to 15 feet in height. The leaves are smooth, stiff and wide with coarse hollow stems. The big, plume-like flower head is grayish-purple when in fruit. Common reed spreads, forming huge colonies by sprouting new shoots through underground stems (rhizomes).

**Garlic mustard**, *Alliaria petiolata*

Garlic mustard is a biennial herb. It begins as a rosette of leaves in the first year, overwinters as a green rosette of leaves, flowers and fruits in the second year, and then dies. First-year rosettes consist of kidney-shaped, garlic-smelling leaves. The second-year plant grows a stem up to 4 feet tall with triangular, sharply-toothed leaves. The small, four-petal flowers are white and grow in clusters at the top of the stem. Garlic mustard produces large quantities of seeds which can remain viable for seven years or more.



**Garlic Mustard**  
Photo by Chris Evans, Bugwood.com

**Purple Loosestrife**

Photo by Linda Wilson, Bugwood.com



**Purple loosestrife**, *Lythrum salicaria*

Commonly found in garden store stock, this plant grows 3-7 feet tall and has a dense bushy growth of 1-50 stems. Long spikes of flowers are purple to magenta; linear-shaped leaves grow opposite along the square stems. Purple loosestrife spreads aggressively by underground stems (rhizomes) and can produce as many as a million seeds per plant.



**Japanese Honeysuckle**

Photo by Chris Evans, Bugwood.com

**Japanese honeysuckle**, *Lonicera japonica*

Japanese honeysuckle is a woody, semi-evergreen vine with opposite, oval leaves. The flowers grow in pairs, are white to yellow, and very fragrant. Fruits, also in pairs, are purple to black berries. This vine climbs and drapes over native vegetation, forming dense patches.