

[2025 Montana Noxious Weed Awareness Week](#)

Weed of the day: Common Buckthorn

Common buckthorn may have been introduced as an ornamental shrub, but it's now a major invasive threat to Montana ecosystems.

Why Avoid Planting Buckthorn?

Buckthorn

- Outcompetes native vegetation.
- Disrupts solid chemistry making it less hospitable for native species.
- Birds will eat it but buckthorn offers poor nutrition.
- Serves as a host plant for pests like soybean aphids, impacting crop health.

Native Alternatives to Plant Instead

- **Chokecherry** offers beautiful blossoms and is a vital food source for wildlife.
- **Red osier dogwood** is known for elegant branching and spring flowers.
- **Serviceberry** provides early spring blooms and edible berries.

By choosing native plant, you are not only beautifying your space but also play a crucial role in preserving our environment.

[Montana Native Plants for Pollinators-USDA](#)

[MT Native Plant Society-Recommended Species for Native Plant Landscaping in MT](#)

[MSU- Important Plants That Every Forest Steward Should Know](#)

[USDA- Conservation Trees and Shrubs for Montana](#)

Thinking of landscaping?

Avoid common buckthorn!

- Sharp thorns
- Toxic berries
- Creates dense thickets



Instead Plant:

- Serviceberry
- Chokecherry
- Redosier dogwood

The are native and support local wildlife!



Information MNWAW- MT Dept AG



Information Common Buckthorn-MWCA



Buckthorn regrowth

Common Buckthorn: An Unwelcome Guest in the Woods

Common buckthorn may look like just another green shrub—but it's anything but harmless. This invasive plant is spreading through forests, streambanks, and parks across the region.

How to Spot It:

Tall shrub or small tree (up to 20 feet!)

Leaves are dark green, oval, and stay green late into fall

Has sharp thorns and small black berries (not safe to eat!)

Inner bark is orange when scratched

Why It's a Problem:

Pushes out native trees and understory plants

Changes soil chemistry and harms wildlife habitat

Birds spread the seeds far and wide after eating the berries

Creates dense thickets that are hard to remove

What You Can Do:

Learn to ID buckthorn and don't plant it—ever!

Remove young plants early (roots and all!)

Report large infestations to land managers or your weed district

Let's protect our wildlands, trails, and native forests from this leafy invader! 