

October Invasive Plant Highlight

Burning Bush



What is Burning Bush?



Burning Bush in the fall

Euonymus alatus, known as Burning Bush or Winged Burning Bush, is a deciduous shrub, which invades forests throughout the Eastern United States. It was introduced to the U.S. around 1860 as an ornamental plant for use in landscaping.

Euonymus alatus can invade not only a variety of disturbed habitats including forest edges, old fields, and roadsides but also undisturbed forests. Birds and other wildlife eat and disperse the fruit. Once established, it can form dense thickets, displacing native vegetation. Despite its invasive nature, it remains popular and is widely sold for its hardiness and the intense red foliage in the fall.

*Burning Bush is ubiquitous in residential landscapes. Replace it with native Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus americanus*) or Red Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*).*



Burning Bush fruit

The shrub can grow 15 to 20 feet tall and equally as wide. The opposite, dark green leaves are less than 2 in. (5 cm) long, smooth, and rounded and taper at the tips. The leaves turn a bright crimson to purplish color in the fall.

The inconspicuous flowers are greenish yellow, have four petals, and bloom May to early June. The stems have two to four prominent corky wings. The fruit appears from September to October and are reddish capsules that split to reveal orange fleshy seeds.

Please Remove It!

If you find Burning Bush in your yard, please remove it. Pull out easy-to-pull plants. If you cannot hand-pull burning bush, then you can dig out the plant. If you cannot dig or pull from the ground, then cut it down and trim new growth as needed. Mechanical controls can be done at any time during the year; however, the best times are the months before or during flowering (April-June).

If the shrub is pulled in the fall while in fruit, the berries should be bagged and disposed of in a landfill – do not compost.

More information about Burning Bush:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/fseual.pdf>

<https://www.invasive.org/alien/pubs/midatlantic/eual.htm>

Why Native Plants?

As open space disappears, it is necessary to look at our own landscapes for biodiversity. Native plants promote the unique relationships between our native plants and animals, from the smallest microorganisms, insects and other invertebrates to birds and mammals.

Native plants, from grasses and wildflowers to towering shade trees, form the base of the food chain. Our native insects are uniquely adapted to eat native plants; some are generalists and can eat a variety of plants, but many are specialists that can only digest certain types of leaves based on the chemistry of the plant.

Research by the entomologist Doug Tallamy has shown that native oak trees support over 500 species of caterpillars whereas ginkgos, a commonly planted landscape tree from Asia, host only 5 species of caterpillars. When it takes over 6,000 caterpillars to raise one brood of chickadees, that is a significant difference.

[More information on native plants:](#)

www.vnps.org/natives

www.plantnovanatives.org

www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder

www.audubon.org/native-plants

[More information on invasive plants:](#)

www.invasiveplantatlas.org

www.invasive.org



Native Virginia Bluebells

Who We Are?

The City of Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team restores the local ecosystem in city parks. We remove damaging invasive plants then re-plant with natives that benefit our local birds, butterflies, bees, and pollinators.

We are a community task force that supports the City's Green Space department. We have monthly events in the Fall and Spring open to volunteers.

Contact Information

Green Space Manager: Jeremy Edwards

Phone: 571-238-5178

Email: JEdwards@fallschurchva.gov

Website: www.fallschurchva.gov/940/Environmental-Opportunities



Native Butterfly Weed