

# Tatarian honeysuckle

*Lonicera tatarica* L.

Synonyms: *Lonicera sibirica* Georgi, nom. nud., *Lonicera tatarica* L. var. *latifolia* Loudon

Other common name: bush honeysuckle

Family: Caprifoliaceae

**Invasiveness Rank:** 69 The invasiveness rank is calculated based on a species' ecological impacts, biological attributes, distribution, and response to control measures. The ranks are scaled from 0 to 100, with 0 representing a plant that poses no threat to native ecosystems and 100 representing a plant that poses a major threat to native ecosystems.

## Description

Tatarian honeysuckle is a bushy, finely branched shrub that can grow up to 3 meters tall. Trunks have gray-brown bark in long, thin scales that do not readily shed. Branches are thin, flexible, and brown to green-brown. Older stems are often hollow. Leaves are hairless, opposite, ovate to oblong, and 25 ½ to 64 mm long. They have entire margins, obtuse to acute tips, and rounded bases. Flowers are pink or white, less than 2 ½ cm long, tubular, and paired. Fruits are orange to red-orange, spherical, and 5 to 7 mm wide. Each berry contains several seeds. Seeds are oval, flattened, and yellow (Welsh 1974, Butterfield et al. 1996).



Flowers and foliage of *Lonicera tatarica* L.

**Similar species:** When the plant is fruiting, the orange or red berries of the exotic Tatarian honeysuckle distinguish it from the native bearberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*). Bearberry honeysuckle has purple-black berries (Hultén 1968).

## Ecological Impact

**Impact on community composition, structure, and interactions:** Tatarian honeysuckle forms dense shrub layers that shade out native vegetation in woodland understories. It reduces the richness and cover of herb communities and delays the establishment of new seedlings. The fruits of Tatarian honeysuckle are eaten by birds. All honeysuckles are relatively free of

significant, known diseases, insect pests, and predators (Batcher and Stiles 2005).

**Impact on ecosystem processes:** Tatarian honeysuckle can alter habitats by decreasing light availability and depleting soil moisture and nutrients (DCR 2004). It can reduce tree regeneration in early- to mid-successional forests (Batcher and Stiles 2005).



*Lonicera tatarica* L.

## Biology and Invasive Potential

**Reproductive potential:** Tatarian honeysuckle has high seed production and is capable of spreading vegetatively (Hoppes 1988, Charles 2001, Batcher and Stiles 2005).

**Role of disturbance in establishment:** Tatarian honeysuckle can invade disturbed sites as well as intact forests (Batcher and Stiles 2005). Areas with disturbances are most vulnerable to invasion (WDNR 2003).

**Potential for long-distance dispersal:** Fruits are distributed by birds and small mammals (Butterfield et al. 1996).

**Potential to be spread by human activity:** Several horticultural forms of Tatarian honeysuckle are cultivated (Welsh 1974, USDA 2010). Many state and private nurseries still sell this species (Batcher and Stiles 2005).

**Germination requirement:** Seeds germinate shortly after they disperse. They can remain viable for two or more

years. Seedlings establish most readily on open ground or in areas with a sparse understory (Butterfield et al. 1996).

**Growth requirements:** Tatarian honeysuckle grows in a wide variety of soils, moisture regimes, environmental conditions, and slope exposures. It can withstand periodic flooding, drought, shade, and temperatures from -50°C to 39°C (Butterfield et al. 1996).

**Congeneric weeds:** Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*), Japanese honeysuckle (*L. japonica*), Morrow's honeysuckle (*L. morrowii*), dwarf honeysuckle (*L. xylosteum*), and showy fly honeysuckle (*L. x bella*) are each considered noxious, prohibited, or invasive in one or more states of the U.S. (Batcher and Shelly 2005, USDA 2010).

### Legal Listings

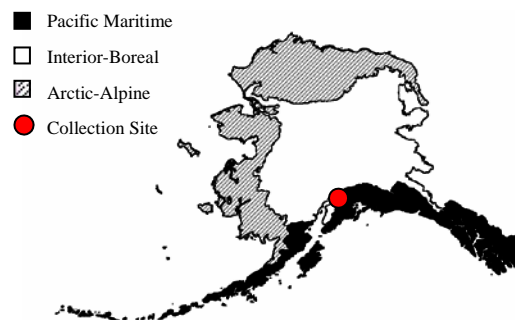
- Has not been declared noxious
- Listed noxious in Alaska
- Listed noxious by other states (CT, MA, NH, VT)
- Federal noxious weed
- Listed noxious in Canada or other countries

### Distribution and Abundance

Tatarian honeysuckle is cultivated in south-central Alaska. In other states, it has spread to lake shores, river banks, marshes, roadsides, pastures, and wooded hillsides. Tatarian honeysuckle grows along forest edges in Iowa, where it has the potential to modify existing

native plant communities (Butterfield et al. 1996). It is found in the understory of woodlands and marshes in Ohio (ODNR 2004).

**Native and current distribution:** Tatarian honeysuckle is native to Europe and East Asia. It has been introduced to North America (DCR 2004). This species has been documented from the Pacific Maritime ecogeographic region of Alaska (Welsh 1974).



Distribution of Tatarian honeysuckle in Alaska

### Management

Mechanical and chemical methods can be used to control infestations of Tatarian honeysuckle. Treatments must be repeated for at least 3 to 5 years to stop new plants from emerging from the seed banks (Butterfield et al. 1996, WDNR 2004, Batcher and Stiles 2005).

### References:

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- Charles, E.W. 2001. Exotic bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera* spp.). Plant Conservation Alliance, Alien Plant Working Group. Available: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/index.htm> [May 11, 2004].
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<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us> [May 11, 2004].

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