

Butterfly Bush

Buddleia davidii
Butterfly Bush Family

Class C Noxious Weed Control Recommended

Identification Tips

- Showy flower spikes with arching branches that can reach heights of 15 feet
- Young stems are green, mature stems develop scraggly, peeling, gray-brown bark
- Leaves are lance- or egg-shaped and oppositely arranged, usually between 4-10 inches long and 1-3 inches wide
- Leaf edges are either finely or coarsely toothed
- 4-parted bell shape flower
- Commonly purple with orange centers
- Fragrant, blooming in mid-summer

Biology

- Deciduous shrub
- Reproduces by producing copious amounts of extremely lightweight, winged seeds that are easily dispersed to distance areas by wind and water.
- The seed can remain in seedbank for 3-5 years
- Butterfly bush can also reproduce vegetatively, as cut stems can sprout roots and grow into new plants.

Impacts

- It forms dense thickets, especially along river banks and river gravel bars, which crowd out native vegetation and may alter soil nutrient concentrations.
- The seeds, so easily spread by wind or water, can remain in the seed bank for three to five years.
- This shrub can begin producing seeds during its first year.
- Once established, this shrub is difficult to remove. It will resprout from the rootstock after its stems are cut, and the cut stems can also grow into new plants.
- Butterfly bush is a Class B Noxious Weed in Oregon, is one of the top twenty weeds in Great Britain, and is a serious problem in New Zealand.

Distribution

- While often planted in yards and gardens as an ornamental, butterfly bush can colonize disturbed areas including roadsides, abandoned railroad tracks, pastures, riverbanks, and recently logged forests.

Questions?

Kitsap County Noxious Weed Control
Program Line: **360-307-4242**
http://kitsap.wsu.edu/noxious_weed



A close up of butterfly bush flowers.



Butterfly bush shrub.



Butterfly bush dominating riparian areas.

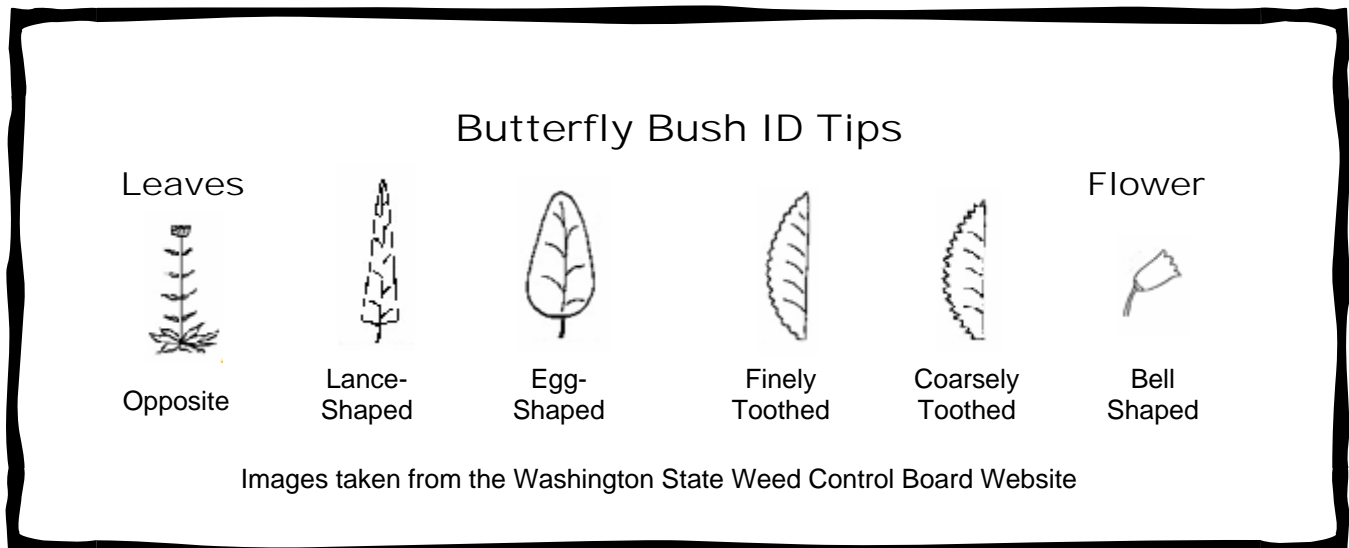
Control Methods

Overall: If you have butterfly bush on your property and do not want to replace them, you should take measures to prevent the plant from establishing elsewhere. Deadhead flowerheads before they produce fruits. Carefully dispose of cut branches, since they can sprout basal roots. There are many suitable replacements for butterfly bush as well; such as Chaste Trees, California Lilacs, and Pacific Ninebark

Herbicide: It is best to cut the stems off, dispose of them properly, then apply the appropriate herbicide, such as glyphosate, to the cut stump. Please refer to the Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook (MISC0049) for more specific instructions, or contact the county Noxious Weed Coordinator at 360-307-4242.

Mechanical: Seedlings can be hand-picked and adult plants can be dug up. However, butterfly bush thrives in recently disturbed areas, so be aware that these methods of removing plants may actually promote the growth of new seedlings. Deadhead flowerspikes before they produce seed to prevent further spread.

Biocontrol: Adults and larvae of the weevil *Cleopus japonicus* consume butterfly bush leaves; this species may have potential as a biocontrol agent in New Zealand.



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