

Italian buckthorn

Rhamnus alaternus

Environmental Weed

FLOWERS:

Light yellow-green flowers with five petals from May to October.

LEAVES:

Alternate ovate, elliptic or obovate, shaped leaves 2-8cm long that are dark glossy green and leathery in texture. The leaves have serrated edges and form singularly along each stem at differing heights.

STEMS:

Older stems are covered in a smooth light grey to brownish-coloured bark. Younger shoots are hairless (i.e. glabrous) or slightly hairy (i.e. puberulent) and green or reddish-brown in colour.

SEED:

Bright red berries. The egg shaped berries range in size from 5- 7mm in diameter and turn black or brown as they ripen over summer. Seed production has been reported as variable with fruit production estimated at approximately 11,000 berries per plant. Grows quickly and easily from seed, which tend to germinate in autumn or spring.

LIFECYCLE:

A large evergreen shrub that grows up to 5m high that is extremely hardy and will grow in full sun, or partial to full shade. The large quantities of berries are spread by birds, ants and wildlife via their scats. It can also spread vegetatively through root suckers, dumped garden waste, or seeds transported in soil. When left, it can form dense thickets, which become difficult to control. It grows quickly, easily forming dense shade and can out compete and eventually suppress native plant life.

CONTROL:

Non-chemical control: Hand pulling small juvenile plants.

Chemical control:

- Cut and paint,
- Drill and fill

(ALL herbicides applications should be carried out as stated within the manufacturers guidelines and the current chemical Material Data Safety Sheets.)