

Common Buckthorn

An invasive exotic shrub



Increasingly found on private property of the Town of Mount Royal, the common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*, also known as the purging or European buckthorn) grows rapidly and aggressively. Maintaining this plant, sometimes wrongly identified as an ornamental shrub, contributes directly to its propagation.

Exploiting all the resources of the soil, the common buckthorn severely affects other nearby species. It is generally the first shrub to develop leaves in the spring and the last to lose them by the end of fall.

Identification

- Leaves are 2.5-6 cm with distinct arching veins and finely toothed along their edges.
- Berry-like black fruit often in clusters which ripen in late summer and fall.
- Many twigs often have small thorn-like tips while the buds are pointed and hug the twig.



Control Methods

- Young plants can be hand-pulled or for larger plants, use mechanical equipment to excavate and remove the majority of the root system. If stems are cut back to a stump, a dark cover should be applied to block sunlight and prevent re-sprouting.
- Replace common buckthorn with non-invasive groundcover, shrubs or trees to suppress its growth in the future. Contact the Green Line for more information.



7:00-15:00 from Monday to Friday
514-734-4222