

Burning Bush

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

DESCRIPTION

Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) is a deciduous, woody, shrub famous for its red fall foliage. It was used widely as a foundation planting before it was placed on the MA prohibited plant list in 2009. The shrub may reach a height and spread of 15 to 20 feet.

Burning bush may have **corky ridges** on its twigs and branches. These “wings” may not develop in shade. Opposite dark green **leaves** (<2") emerge in April – May and start to turn red in mid October. The **flowers** develop in late spring, are small, green-yellow, and four petaled. The **fruit** starts as small, purple-red capsules and develop into seeds with orange-red arils over the summer.

WHY IS IT BAD?

Seedlings establish fast and dominate forest understories preventing regeneration of canopy trees. The plant tolerates most soil types and site conditions. It is highly resilient against pests and diseases.



DISTRIBUTION & SPREAD

Burning bush produces lots of seeds that birds and small mammals from yards to natural areas by birds. When it escapes from gardens to wild areas it quickly establishes. Foliage blocks sunlight from reaching the ground, effectively choking out native wildflowers, tree seedlings, and shrubs. As the new shrub begins to produce more seeds a dense monoculture spreads through the area.

CONTROL METHODS

Burning bush is capable of regeneration from root, twig, or branch fragments. Seedlings can be pulled by hand and shrubs can be repeatedly cut to the ground to control re-sprouts, or cut and treated with systemic herbicides.

There is no known biological control for burning bush.

When using herbicides carefully read the label; the label is the law.



To learn more about invasives in Medford, scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/02155Invasives>

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Native Alternatives



Keep Medford Beautiful is a community effort initiated by Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn to organize local volunteers to help clean up and beautify the city's streets and public spaces.



Learn more about the work we're doing and ways to get involved at www.medfordma.org/KMB or scan the QR code.



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