



Controlling Autumn-Olive

A practical guide to invasive species removal



What is Autumn-Olive?

Autumn-Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) is an invasive shrub or small tree that is typically found in disturbed areas, pastures, roadsides, and fallow fields. It is an excellent competitor and nitrogen fixer. Not only does autumn-olive out-compete native species for space and resources, but it can actually change the chemical makeup of the soil. Controlling Autumn-Olive protects the population of native plants on your land.

History

Autumn-olive is native to East Asia. It was introduced to the U.S. in the 1830s to quickly revitalize natural areas decimated by mining and to prevent erosion on farms.

Why is it such a successful invasive?

- Vigorous fruiting
- Fast-growing and maturing
- Seeds widely dispersed by birds
- Thrives in poor soil

How do I identify Autumn-Olive?

- Long, lance-shaped, simple, alternate leaves covered in scales; underside covered in silvery scales
- Both young twigs and berries covered in golden scales
- Flowers are small, yellow-white, and bell-shaped
- Flowers in spring, fruits in late summer with red berry-like fruits, edible to both wild animals and humans. Berries are high in antioxidants.
- Bark is smooth and gray when young but matures into split and fissured bark

Control Methods

Mechanical

- Pull seedlings and sprouts by hand from moist soil, making sure root system is completely removed.
- Do not cut or burn larger plants; this will result in thicker, denser growth upon re-sprouting.

Chemical

- Larger plants can be controlled with glyphosate chemical treatment. However, glyphosate will control native plants as well as autumn-olive, so the herbicide must be applied with caution.
- Applying glyphosate to freshly-cut stumps effectively controls the plant while minimizing the herbicide's impact on native neighboring plants.

Preventing the Spread of Invasives

- When walking your property with friends, family, and pets, stick to trails and paths to minimize the spread of invasive seeds.
- When leaving a natural area inhabited by invasive species, check your shoes, clothing, and pets for stray plant seeds and fruits.



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Land Conservancy

1100 N. Main Street, Suite #203 · Ann Arbor, MI 48104
734.302.5263 · www.legacylandconservancy.org

