

Russian Olive Fact Sheet

Elaeagnus angustifolia

Elaeagnaceae Family



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



Patrick Breen, Oregon State University, Bugwood.org



Patrick Breen, Oregon State University, Bugwood.org

Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** The fragrant flowers are 0.5-0.6 in. wide, silvery outside and yellow within.
- ❷ **Seeds:** The fruit are 0.4 in. long, yellow, and almost completely covered by densely silver scales. The fruit contain one large seed.
- ❸ **Leaves:** The leaves are simple, alternate and 1-4 in. long and have silver scales on both sides.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowers appear in May to June.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Russian olive is a shrub or small tree that can grow to 35 ft. The young branches are silvery while the older branches are brown. They are occasionally thorny and covered with scales.

Impacts:

- Russian olive grows especially well in riparian situations, but can also be found growing along roads and highways where it was once planted in the late 1800's. It has nitrogen fixing nodules and has a high drought and salt tolerance.
- It is especially proficient in out-competing native plants after a flood, and can threaten large native trees, such as cottonwoods, through its ability to form dense stands.
- Despite its invasive properties, Russian olive is still being recommended and sold to landowners for horticulture, wildlife habitats, and as windbreaks. This has likely contributed to the current widespread occurrence of Russian olive in the U.S.

Control:

- Russian olive seedlings and sprouts can easily be hand-pulled when the soil is moist.
- Once it becomes firmly established, the most effective control method is the cut-stump herbicide treatment. This method is both labor-intensive and expensive, but can be highly effective, and is more target-specific than foliar applications of herbicide.
- Most non-chemical methods for the control of large Russian olive stands are not effective.



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.



Salt Lake County Weed
Control Program
www.slco.org/weeds/
385-468-4035
noxiousweeds@slco.org