Common Invasive Shrubs of Lake Lansing Park North

Problems posed by woody invasive shrubs
- They leaf out earlier and grow dormant later in the year. With no natural predators or diseases to limit their population, they out-compete native plants for nutrients, water, and light.
- As a result, they displace native habitat and food sources needed by nesting birds and other wildlife adapted to a specific niche.
- Their heavy loads of berries spread to new sites via animal droppings.
- Invasive shrubs often provide the wrong nutrients or bloom out of sync with the requirements of native insects and wildlife.
- The spread of invasive plants often increases browse pressure on native plants by deer and rabbit populations, which favor native food sources that have existed in Michigan for thousands of years.
- The product of these factors is a loss of natural biodiversity, altered forest composition and structure, and the interruption of natural processes such as forest succession.

Habitat: Woodland edges, open woods, old fields. Once established, readily invades undisturbed sites.


Fruit: Small, bright red, egg-shaped berries that remain on stems into winter.

Similar Species: Can be mistaken for gooseberry when leaves are absent.

Japanese Barberry
Berberis thunbergii

Multiflora Rose
Rosa multiflora

Habitat: Fields, roadsides, prairies, open woods.

How to identify: Each twig contains 5-7 small leaflets with toothed edges. Feathery stipules on leaf petioles. Multiple arching stems with many large curved thorns. Snowy clusters of flowers. Fruits: Round red berries (rosehips) remain on stems throughout winter.

Similar Species: Native roses; distinguish by feathery stipules on leaf petioles (photo at top left).

Glossy Buckthorn
Frangula alnus

Habitat: Common buckthorn is more aggressive in dry soils, while glossy buckthorn is more aggressive in wet soils.

How to identify: Small tree/hedge. Veins curve toward leaf tip. Common has thorns that occur near the terminal bud and 3 pairs of veins per leaf; glossy has 7 pairs of veins. Fruit: Small black or dark purple, pea-sized berries clustered at stems.

Similar Species: Native dogwoods, field & teasel leaves are flat, perpendicular to the middle vein, and pubescent; if a silky string-like substance appears, it is a dogwood.

Common Buckthorn
Rhamnus cathartica

Habitat: Common buckthorn is more aggressive in dry soils, while glossy buckthorn is more aggressive in wet soils.

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Ways YOU can make a difference!
- Learn to identify the common woody invasive shrubs. If you have a question, feel free to contact midmich@stewardshipnetwork.org.
- If you have invasive shrubs in your yard, replace them with beautiful native and non-invasive species, such as ninebark, butterfly bush, shrubby cinquefoil, arrowwood viburnum, Russian sage, and elderberry.
- Buy and plant natives from the Michigan Native Plant Producers' Association: http://www.mnpa.org
- Ask your local plant source to stop carrying Japanese barberry, honeysuckle, and multiflora rose, which have become serious problems in southern Michigan's natural areas.
- Learn about nature and help us clear Lake Lansing Park North of invasive shrubs. Participate in an upcoming restoration outing by contacting: contact@ingham.org or midmich@stewardshipnetwork.org

The Future Of Our Natural Areas Depends On Us

YOU can help!