

common buckthorn

Rhamnus cathartica

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Rhamnales
Family: Rhamnaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, nonnative

The common buckthorn is a native of Europe that was transported to the United States with early settlers and has spread tremendously.

FEATURES

The common buckthorn may grow in the form of a tree or shrub. This deciduous, perennial plant has leaves that are arranged opposite each other along the twigs. Branches are spine-tipped. Each simple, oval leaf is toothed along the edges. Flowers are green and have four petals. Flowers develop in the leaf axils. The fruit is a black drupe, that is, a seed surrounded by a hard, dry covering that is in turn covered by a fleshy material.

BEHAVIORS

Common buckthorn may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It grows in waste areas and disturbed woodlands. Flowers are produced from May through June. The fruits are attractive to birds, which eat them and disperse the plant's seeds in their wastes. The common buckthorn is a native of Europe that was transported to the United States with early settlers and has spread tremendously.

ILLINOIS RANGE



leaves and fruit

Aquatic Habitats

none

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge



leaves and fruit