

# Autumn Olive

## *Elaeagnus umbellata*



Pictures By: G. Fewless

### ***Invasive Plants are a Threat to:***

- **Forests and wetlands**
- **Native plants**
- **Perennial gardens**
- **Wildlife**
- **Lakes and rivers**
- **Human Health**
- **Farmland**

Date Updated: 10/06

### **Description:**

Autumn olive is a medium to large deciduous shrub. Its leaves are alternate, oval to lanceolate, untoothed and grow to 1-3 inches in length. The upper surface of the leaves is dark green to grayish-green in color, while the lower surface is covered with silvery white scales. The small, light yellow flowers are borne along twigs after the leaves have appeared early in the growing season. The fruits are small, round, juicy, reddish to pink, dotted with scales and are produced in great quantity.

### **Distribution:**

Autumn olive is found in disturbed areas, along roadsides, in pastures, fields and sparse woodlands. It is often found in poor soils due to its nitrogen-fixing root nodules that allow it to tolerate poor conditions. It can also survive the effects of salt, drought and pHs as low as 4.0. However, it does not grow well in wet habitats or in dense forests. Autumn olive is now found over the eastern half of the United States and in all counties of Indiana.

### **Problem:**

Autumn olive exhibits prolific fruiting, rapid growth, is widely dispersed by birds and can thrive in poor soil. It has the ability to produce up to 80 pounds of fruit in a single season. Due to its nitrogen fixing capabilities, it has the capacity to adversely affect the nitrogen cycle of the native communities that may depend on infertile soils. It is vigorous and competitive against native species in open communities like prairies and savannas and resprouts after cutting or burning. It also creates heavy shade which suppresses plants that require direct sunlight.

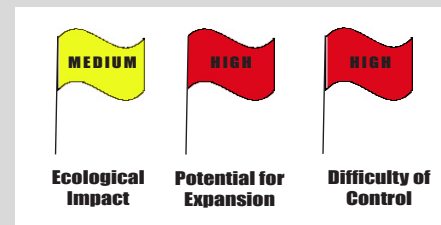
### **Origin:**

Autumn olive is native to China, Korea and Japan. It was first introduced to United States from Japan in 1830. In Indiana, as in the rest of the country, autumn olive was often used for the revegetation of disturbed habitats. It has also been sold commercially for roadsides, landscaping and gardens.



Picture By: J. Allison @ [www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org)

### **IPSAWG Ranking:**



### **IPSAWG Recommendation:**

- Do not buy, sell or plant autumn olive in Indiana.
- Help by eradicating autumn olive on your property.
- Also avoid Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia* L.); this species is considered invasive in many parts of the Midwest though not yet in Indiana.

This ranking illustrates the results of an assessment conducted by the **Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group (IPSAWG)**, which is made up of many organizations and agencies concerned about invasive plant species. IPSAWG's goal is to assess which plant species may threaten natural areas in Indiana and develop recommendations to reduce their use in the state.

For more information about IPSAWG and the assessment tool used to rank invasive species, visit their website:

[www.invasivespecies.IN.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.IN.gov)

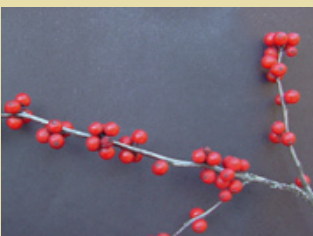
## ALTERNATIVES to Autumn olive:



Dogwoods  
(*Cornus sericea*,  
*C. amomum*, and  
*C. racemosa*)



Chokeberry  
(*Aronia melanocarpa*)



Winterberry  
(*Ilex verticillata*)



Northern arrowwood  
(*Viburnum dentatum*)

Pictures By (Top to Bottom): D. E. Herman, U Conn, Indy Parks and D. E. Herman.

### Other Alternatives:

- Blackhaw  
(*Viburnum prunifolium*)  
Serviceberry  
(*Amelanchier arborea*)

### Control Methods:

Hand pulling autumn olive seedlings can be effective. However, mowing or cutting autumn olive plants can cause vigorous resprouting. Even repeated cutting is usually ineffective without treating stumps and/or resprouts with herbicide. Several herbicides have been used alone or in combination to control autumn olive, including glyphosate and triclopyr. Foliar applications of triclopyr (1-2%) or glyphosate (1-2%) are effective on resprouts

following cutting during the growing season. Glyphosate (20%) can also be effective when applied directly to cut stumps. Applying 2% triclopyr mixed with a basal oil directly to the

bark on the lower portion of the woody plant is also an effective control. Multiple treatments may be required. **Always read and follow pesticide label directions.**



An autumn olive plant. (Picture By: J. Miller @ www.invasive.org)

## Eight Easy Ways to Combat Invasive Plants

You can **help stop** the spread of **invasive plants** by following these **8 easy guidelines**:

1. Ask for only non-invasive species when you acquire plants. Request that nurseries and garden centers sell only non-invasive plants.
2. Seek information on invasive plants. Sources include botanical gardens, horticulturists, conservationists, and government agencies.
3. Scout your property for invasive species, and remove invasives before they become a problem. If plants can't be removed, at least prevent them from going to seed.
4. Clean your boots before and after visiting a natural area to prevent the spread of invasive plant seeds.
5. Don't release aquarium plants into the wild.
6. Volunteer at local parks and natural areas to assist ongoing efforts to diminish the threat of invasive plants.
7. Help educate your community through personal contacts and in such settings as garden clubs and civic groups.
8. Support public policies and programs to control invasive plants.

### For More Information:

On this assessment and IPSAWG:

**IPSAWG**  
[www.invasivespecies.IN.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.IN.gov)

On identification and control techniques:

**The Nature Conservancy's Wildland Weeds**  
[www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu](http://www.tncweeds.ucdavis.edu)

On native plant alternatives and sources:

**Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society**  
[www.inpaws.org](http://www.inpaws.org)

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