

BUSH HONEYSUCKLE

Invasive Species

Identification:

There are two primary species of Bush Honeysuckle: *Amur* and *Bella*. Their berries are small, spherical and originate in pairs at the leaf base. Unlike native Honeysuckles, invasive Honeysuckles have hollow stems and lack thorns. While the berries and stems of both species share common characteristics, their height, leaves and flowers are distinct from each other.

Amur Honeysuckle:

Height - up to 20 feet

Leaves - 2 to 3 inches long, generally green with a fuzzy underside, which grow in opposite pairs.

Flowers - white and pink tubular flowers with thin petals

Bella Honeysuckle:

Height - 6 to 15 feet

Leaves - 1 to 2.5 inches long, green with fuzzy underside, which grow in opposite pairs.

Flowers - Generally pink in color, and turn yellow with age.

Habitat: Bush Honeysuckle is most common in upland forests and woodlands, but can also be found in fields, along the road, and near marshes. Bush Honeysuckle can grow in varying moisture conditions but does best when conditions are stable.

Reproduction: Honeysuckle is spread through consumption of its berries by birds and various animals, which contain the plant's seed. After eating the berries, the spread of the species is dependent upon where the consuming animals defecate. The seeds that are left behind in the scat will then use this natural fertilizer to begin growing into a new Honeysuckle plant.

Reasons for Invasive Status: Bush Honeysuckle was introduced in the 1800s for ornamental



Bella Honeysuckle with flowers. Bella honeysuckle flowers are generally pink in color and turn yellow with age.

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purposes from Asia. Shade competition, when shrubs outcompete native plants by growing leaves sooner than native ones, yields negative consequence for slower growing plants because it blocks light and stunts native plant growth. Shade competition is the major reason Bush Honeysuckle suppress and damage the native species that historically would have occurred in upland forests near the Missouri River. This makes Bush Honeysuckle one of the most aggressive invasive species encountered throughout the forests and woodlands in Missouri. While Bush Honeysuckle is a big issue in Missouri's upland forests, it is less common in the Missouri River floodplain because of the frequent flooding. Bush Honeysuckles also release what is called an allelopathic compound into the soil. This chemical impedes the growth of other species in the area to increase the Honeysuckle's chances of survival and reproduction.

Sources:

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For More Information: This is issue number 6 in volume I of issues all related to the Missouri River. To access the rest of the collection, visit the Missouri River Relief Education page at riverrelief.org. This issue was published in June 2018.