

## Invasive Plants Fact Sheet



**Bush Honeysuckles** *Lonicera tatarica* L., *L. morrowii* A. Gray, *L. mackii* (Rupr.) Maxim, *L. xylosteum* L., *L. x bella* Zabel Honeysuckle Family (Caprifoliaceae)

**Status:** Common and invasive in Connecticut. **Description:** Bush honeysuckles are upright, generally deciduous shrubs that range from six to sixteen feet in height. Tatarian honeysuckle (*L. tatarica* L.) has smooth, hairless, bluish-green leaves and pink or white flowers that do not turn yellow as they age. Morrow honeysuckle (*L. morrowii* A. Gray) has downy leaves and white flowers that turn pale yellow as they age. Bella honeysuckle (*L. x bella* Zabel) is a hybrid between tatarian and Morrow honeysuckle. Amur honeysuckle (*L. mackii* [Rupr.] Maxim) has dark green leaves that are hairy on the veins and white flowers that yellow with age. European Fly honeysuckle (*L. xylosteum* L.) has yellow flowers and leaves that are hairy underneath.

**Preferred habitat:** Abandoned fields, roadsides, woodlands, and edges of marshes are all places to find bush honeysuckles. They tolerate varying moisture levels and moderate shade, but prefer open areas and achieve the greatest fruit production when in full sun.

**Seasonal cycle:** Bush honeysuckles leaf out early in the spring before many native species and hold their leaves until November. They flower in May and June and fruit in July and August. The flowers are fragrant, tubular, and borne in pairs. The fruit is a many-seeded, red, orange, to yellow berry. **Distribution:** In North America, bush honeysuckles have naturalized from New England south to North Carolina and as far west as Iowa. All the bush honeysuckles are found in the central portion of this area, yet each has a slightly different, overlapping range.

**Other points of interest:** Bush honeysuckles are native to Europe, eastern Asia, and Japan. Most species were introduced as ornamentals in the 1800s; tatarian honeysuckle is a popular ornamental shrub that was introduced from southern Russia in 1752. Amur honeysuckle is a problem in the midwestern United States, where it forms dense stands and shades out native herbaceous groundcover. The spread of bush honeysuckles is generally accomplished by birds, which consume the ripened fruit in the summer.

**Control:** Light infestations may be cleared by hand with a shovel or hoe. For control to be effective, the entire root must be removed. Severe infestations may be controlled by repeated treatments of cutting, burning or applying herbicide. Cutting should be conducted during the early spring and again in the late summer or early fall. A glyphosate herbicide (20% solution) may be applied to the leaves or freshly cut stumps late in the growing season. If prescribed burning is chosen, it should be conducted during the growing season. Control methods must be repeated for a period of three to five years to inhibit growth of new shoots and eradicate target plants. To prevent re-invasion, "underplanting" disturbed woods with tolerant native woody species may be effective. **Additional information sources:** Invasive Plant Species of Virginia. Bush Honeysuckles. C. Williams. 1994. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and

Virginia Plant Society. Plants Invasive in Rhode Island L. Gould and I. Stuckey. The Rhode Island Wild Plant Society Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 2: September 1992. Vegetation Management Guideline: Bush Honeysuckles. R. Nyboer. Natural Areas Journal Vol. 12 (4) 1992. Element Stewardship Abstract for *Lonicera tatarica*, *L. morrowii*, and *L. X bella*. C. K. Converse. 1985. The Nature Conservancy. Unpublished document. Diagnostic information: Tall shrub (6 to 16 feet tall). Leaves: Opposite, simple. Ovate to oblong, 1 to 2-1/2" long, rounded at base. Flowers: Small, fragrant, axillary; lips equalling or longer than the tube; upper four-lobed to its base. Style hirsute. Fruit: Berries many-seeded; red or yellow; 1/4" in diameter; borne in pairs usually on axillary peduncles. Stems and branches: Wide spreading stems; slightly drooping branches. Older branches hollow. This fact sheet has been prepared by The Nature Conservancy Connecticut Chapter in cooperation with The Natural Diversity Data Base of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. It may be reproduced without permission.

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