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Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas

Swearingen, J., K. Reshetiloff, B. Slattery, and S. Zwicker. 2002. Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas. National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 82 pp.

Exotic Bush Honeysuckles

Amur (*Lonicera maackii*),
 Bell's (*L. x bella*),
 Dwarf (*L. xylosteum*),
 Fragrant (*L. fragrantissima*),
 Morrow's (*L. morrowii*),
 Standish's (*L. standishii*),
 Tartarian (*L. tatarica*)

Origin: Eurasia, Japan, China, Korea, Manchuria, Turkey and southern Russia



James L. Reveal

Background

Exotic bush honeysuckles have been used for many years as ornamentals, for wildlife cover and for soil erosion control. Exotic bush honeysuckles out-compete and displace native plants and alter natural habitats by decreasing light availability and depleting soil moisture and nutrients for native species. Exotic bush honeysuckles compete with native plants for pollinators, resulting in reduced seed set for native species. Unlike native shrubs, the fruits of exotic bush honeysuckles are carbohydrate-rich and do not provide migrating birds with the high-fat content needed for long flights.



John M. Randall, TNC

Distribution and Ecological Threat

Amur, Tartarian, Morrow's and Bell's honeysuckle generally range from the central Great Plains to southern New England and south to Tennessee and North Carolina. The remaining species are sporadically distributed. Exotic bush honeysuckles are relatively shade-intolerant and most often occur in forest edge, abandoned field, pasture, roadsides and other open, upland habitats. Woodlands, especially those that have been grazed or otherwise disturbed, may also be invaded by exotic bush honeysuckles. Morrow's honeysuckle and Bell's honeysuckle have the greatest habitat breadth and are capable of invading bogs, fens, lakeshores, sand plains and other uncommon habitat types.

Description and Biology

- Plant: upright, generally deciduous shrubs from 6 to 15 feet in height. Older stems are often hollow.
- Leaves: 1 to 2 1/2 inch, egg-shaped leaves are opposite along the stem and short-stalked.
- Flowers, fruits and seeds: pairs of fragrant, tubular flowers less than 1 inch long are borne along the stem in the leaf axils. Flower color varies from creamy white to pink or crimson in some varieties of Tartarian honeysuckle. Flowering generally occurs from early to late spring, but varies for each species and cultivar. The fruits are red to orange, many-seeded berries that ripen from early summer to fall depending on the species.
- Spreads: prolific fruits are highly attractive to birds. Vegetative sprouting aids in the

persistence and spread of these exotic shrubs.

- Look-alikes: native species of shrub honeysuckles; most native bush honeysuckles have solid stems, and exotic species have hollow stems.

Prevention and Control

Mechanical and chemical methods are the primary means of control of exotic bush honeysuckles. No biological control agents are currently available for these plants. Hand removal of seedlings or small plants may be useful for light infestations.

Native Alternatives

arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*)



Britt Slattery, USFWS

northern bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)



Chris Miller, NRCS

swamp rose (*Rosa palustris*)



Chris Miller, NRCS

groundsel tree (*Baccharis halimifolia*)



Britt Slattery, USFWS

spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)



Chris Miller, NRCS

red or black chokeberry
(*Aronia arbutifolia* or *melanocarpa*)



Britt Slattery, USFWS



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Last updated on Wednesday, November 05, 2003 at 01:26 PM
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