

Autumn Olive

SHRUBS



May



April



April



October



April



December



December

J. Gibson

***Elaeagnus umbellata* Thunb. ELUM**

Plant. Tardily deciduous bushy leafy shrub, 3 to 20 feet (1 to 6 m) in height, with scattered thorny branches. Leaves silvery scaly beneath, with many red berries in fall.

Stem. Twigs slender and silver scaly, spur twigs common, with some lateral twigs becoming pointed like thorns. Branches and main stems glossy olive drab with scattered thorns and many whitish dots (lenticels), becoming light gray to gray brown with age and eventually fissuring to expose light-brown inner bark.

Leaves. Alternate, elliptic 2 to 3 inches (5 to 8 cm) long and 0.8 to 1.2 inches (2 to 3 cm) wide. Margins entire and wavy. Bright green to gray green above with silver scaly midvein and densely silver scaly beneath. Petioles short and silvery.

Flowers. February to June. Axillary clusters, each with 5 to 10 tubular flowers with 4 lobes. Silvery white to yellow. Fragrant.

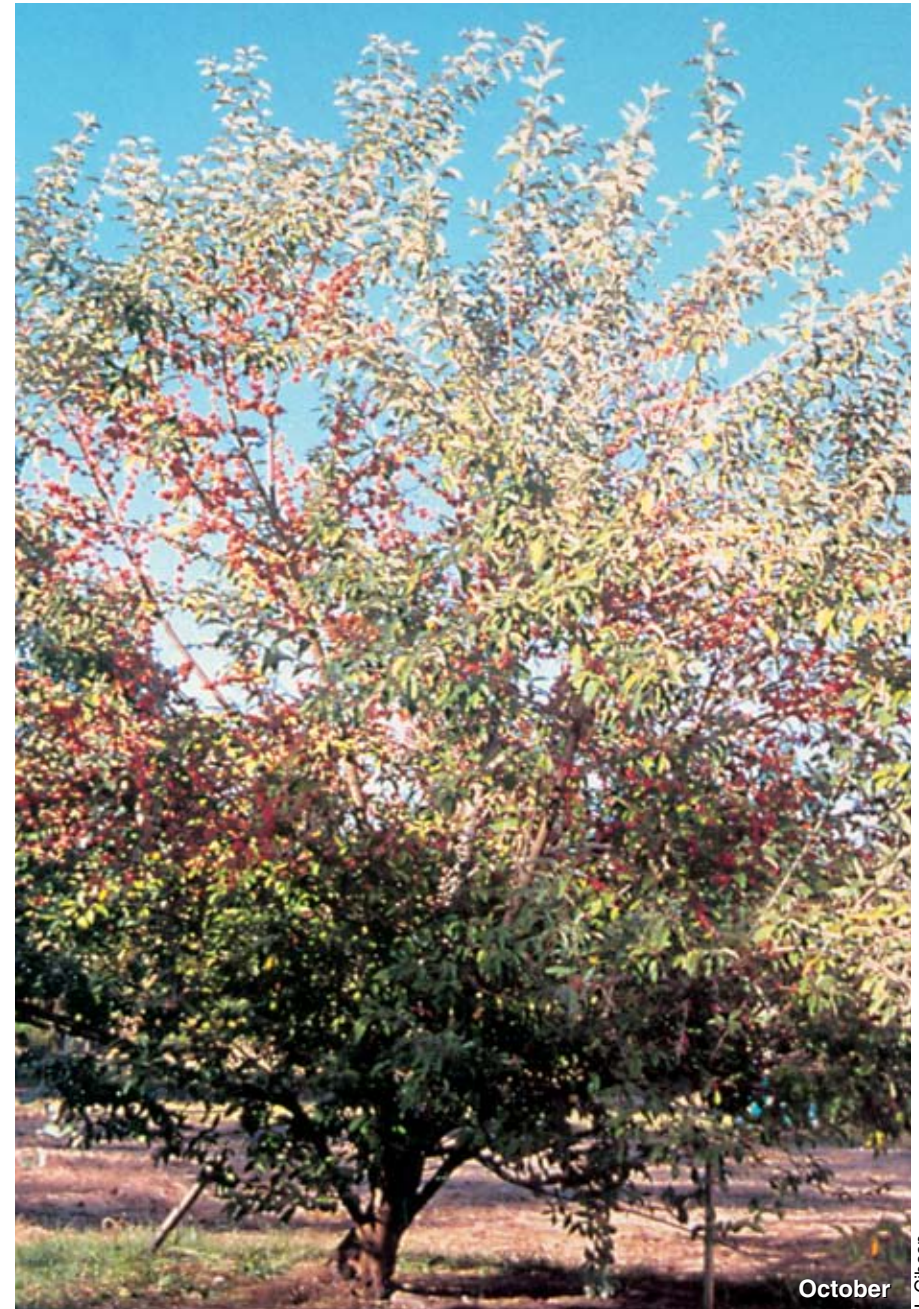
Fruit and seeds. August to November. Round, juicy drupe 0.3 to 0.4 inch (7 to 10 mm) containing one nutlet. Red and finely dotted with silvery to silvery-brown scales.

Ecology. Prefers drier sites. Shade tolerant. Spreads by animal-dispersed seeds and found as scattered plants in forest openings and open forests, eventually forming dense stands. A nonleguminous nitrogen fixer.

Resembles silverthorn or thorny olive, *E. pungens* Thunb., and Russian olive, *E. angustifolia* L. Silverthorn is an evergreen that has brown scaly and hairy twigs, flowers in late fall, and few reddish-silver scaly drupes in spring. Russian olive has silver scaly twigs and leaves, flowers in early summer, and many yellow olives in fall and winter. **Also resembles** minniebush, *Menziesia pilosa* (Michx. ex Lam.) Juss. ex Pers., a Southern Appalachian native at high elevations, which is distinguished by glands, not scales, on the midvein and leaves with finely serrate margins.

History and use. Introduced from China and Japan in 1830. Widely planted for wildlife habitat, strip mine reclamation, and shelterbelts.

States with suspected
infestations are
shown in gray.

**Autumn Olive****2038**

October