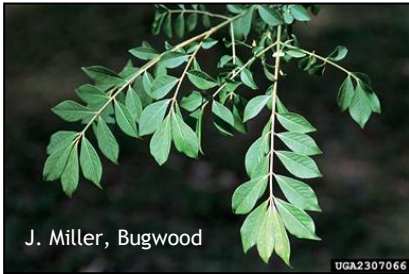


GREEN GONE BAD

FEATURED ORNAMENTAL PLANT: *EUONYMUS ALATUS* (WINGED BURNING BUSH)

Some exotic ornamental plants behave badly when they escape from the place they are planted. Infestations of these plants have negative impacts on nature. One of these plants is *Euonymus alatus*; common name: Winged Burning Bush.



EUONYMUS ALATUS is an ornamental shrub often planted for the attractive fall foliage. It is called Winged Burning Bush because of the 4 ridges on the stems and the bright red fall leaf color. This shrub was introduced from northeast Asia in the 1860's.

Euonymus alatus is a deciduous multi-stemmed shrub that grows from 5-10 feet tall and sometimes up to 20 feet. Leaves are opposite, elliptic, and finely toothed; 1-4 inches long, dark green before turning red in the fall. Small yellowish-green flowers bloom in pairs during late spring. The fruit is a reddish dangling capsule turning purple when ripe.

The problem with *Euonymus alatus* is that it can escape from planted landscapes into natural areas. It spreads through vegetative growth by root suckering. Seeds can

also be spread by birds. Once established in mature forests, this vegetative growth forms dense thickets that can inhibit native plant growth and germination through shading and competition for nutrients and water in the soil. This results in reduction of plant biodiversity and overall quality of natural communities.

Once native plant communities are altered,

wildlife populations may suffer due to the change in habitat structure (needed for nesting and cover) and reduction in food resources (insect abundance often drops in infested areas). Insects are extremely important to songbirds for feeding their young during nesting season.



Infestation in natural area



It may not be widely known among horticulturalists and landscapers that this plant can be harmful to natural habitats. Please consider removing this species from your inventory. There are many native shrubs that can be sold and planted in its place. These include *Euonymus americanus* (Strawberry Bush), *Vaccinium corymbosum* (Highbush Blueberry), *Vaccinium elliotii* (Elliott's Blueberry), *Aronia melanocarpa* (Black Chokecherry), *Rhus aromatica* (Fragrant Sumac), *Lindera benzoin* (Spicebush), and *Itea virginica* (Virginia Willow), *Rhus copallinum* (Winged Sumac - leaves turn red in fall).

Please visit <http://www.invasive.org/species/subject.cfm?sub=3023> for more information.

