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Controlling Buckthorn

Controlling seedlings or small buckthorn plants

For individual plants

If less than 3/8 inch in diameter, remove by hand. Small seedlings can be pulled and will not re-sprout. If greater than 3/8 inch, use a hand tool that pulls the shrub out, such as a “Weed Wrench” or “Root Talon”. The “Weed Wrench” comes in four different sizes and will remove buckthorn stems up to 2.5 inches in diameter. Removing by hand is easier if the soil is moist. Before you pull or dig buckthorn out of your soil, **contact Gopher State One Call (1-800-252-1166)** to ensure there are no buried utilities in the area.

If pulling individual plants is impractical

Spray foliage of short buckthorn or seedlings with a herbicide. Roundup will kill all actively growing vegetation on which it is sprayed. **Bonide Poison Ivy and Brush Killer** will kill broadleaf plants and will not harm grasses when applied properly.

Controlling large buckthorn

Buckthorn plants that are two inches in diameter or larger, are best controlled by cutting the stem at the soil surface and then cover or treat the stump to prevent re-sprouting. This can be effectively done with hand tools (for a few plants). Chain saws or brush cutters. If only cutting a few stumps they can be covered with a tin can or black plastic to prevent re-sprouting. Otherwise, stumps should be treated immediately after cutting (within 2 hours) with an herbicide containing Triclopyr (such as **Bonide Poison Ivy and Brush Killer**) or **Roundup** to prevent resprouting.

The best time to cut and chemically treat the stumps is in late summer and throughout the fall. Herbicides can be applied to cut stumps with a paintbrush, or a low volume sprayer. When using water-soluble herbicide products like **Bonide Poison Ivy and Brush Killer**, or **Roundup** treat only the cut surface.

Note:

Buckthorn seeds in the soil can remain viable for up to five years. Follow-up control of seedlings that emerge after initial control efforts is important on all sites. With no follow-up control, buckthorn will come back. Fire offers a long-term management option in grassland or savanna cover-types. Burning will need to be done every 2-3 years. If burning is not an option, a follow up treatment of the seedlings (pulling or spraying) is needed.

After buckthorn control, many sites may require replanting of desirable tree, shrub, and herbaceous species.

Always read and follow the instructions and precautions on any herbicide labels.