

Invasive Plant Identification

Maine Natural Areas Program
Karen Karter, Grant Regan-Loomis
Invasive Plant Interns



DEPARTMENT OF
Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry



Helpful Identification Tools

Native Plant Trust
GO BOTANY

 **iNaturalist**

seek
by iNaturalist



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Asiatic bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus

- Simple alternate leaves with weakly toothed edges, sometimes wavy
- Bright orange roots
- Flower clusters along leaf axils





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VERY
INVASIVE

Multiflora rose

Rosa multiflora

- Fringed stipule
- Recurved thorns
- ¼ inch wide rose hips



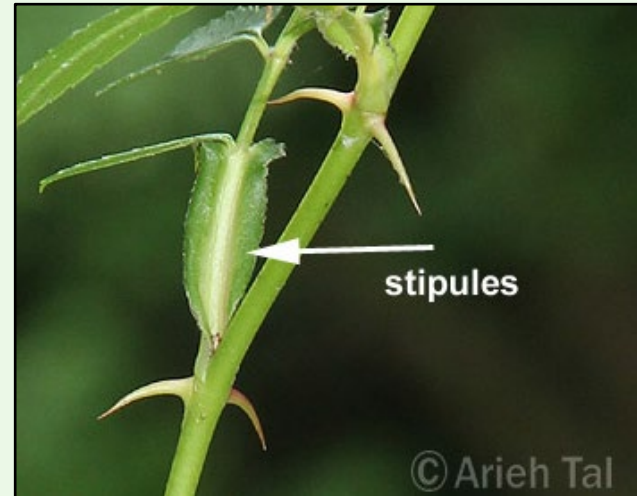
Stipule Comparisons of Rose species in Maine



Multiflora rose



Native



Native

(Andrew Conboy, bplant.org)

VERY
INVASIVE

Rugosa rose

Rosa rugosa

- Leaflets serrated, heavily veined, and wrinkled
- Densely prickled stems
- Rose hips 1 inch wide



VERY
INVASIVE

Norway maple

Acer platanoides

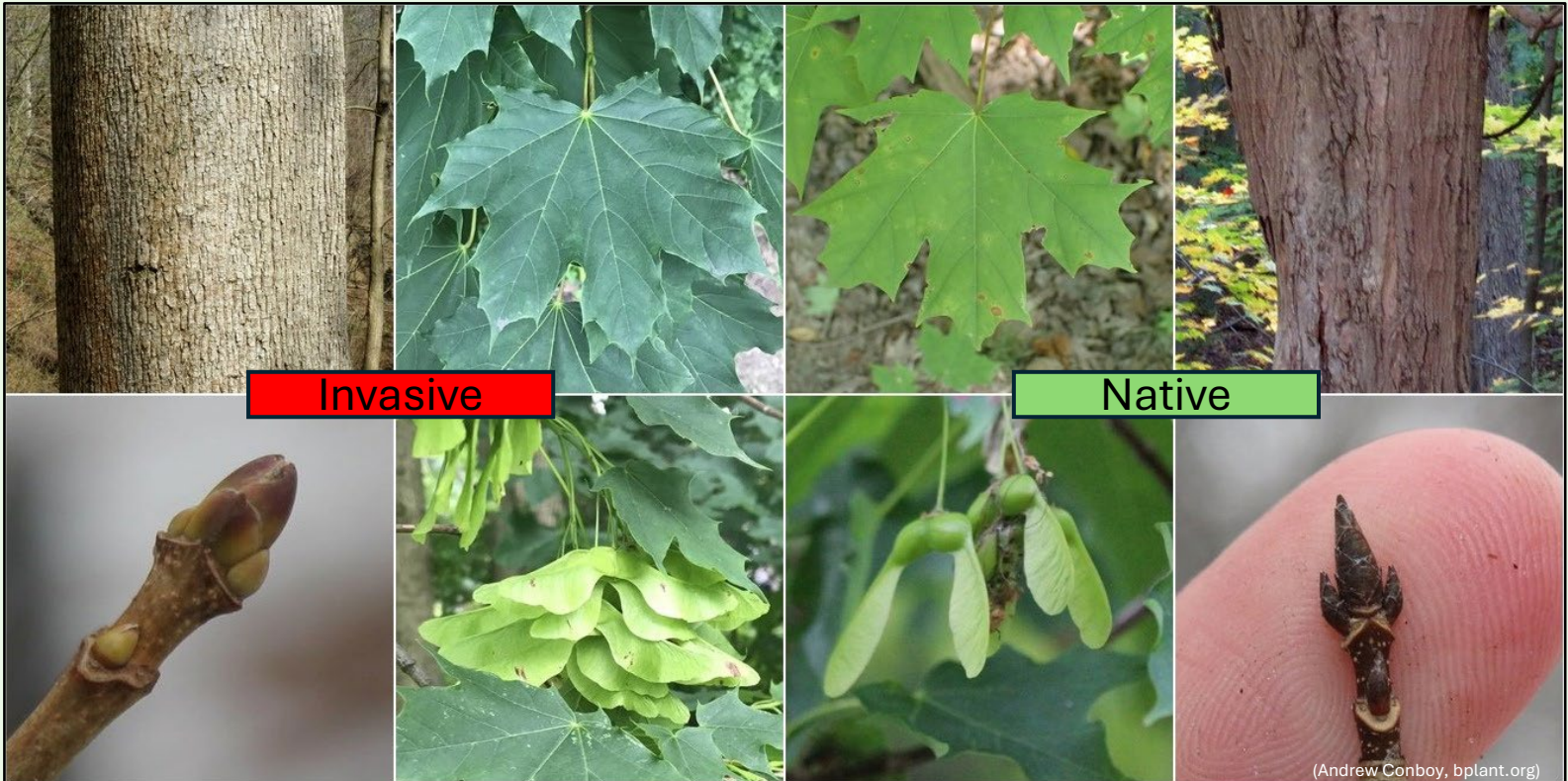
- Large deciduous tree, up to 60 feet tall
- Leaves are opposite, 5-7 lobed with pointed tips
- Furrowed, dark gray bark, unlike native maples



Norway maple

Native Look-a-like:
Sugar maple

- Brown pointed buds
- Downward bend samara
- Clear petiole sap



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Shrubby honeysuckles

Lonicera spp.

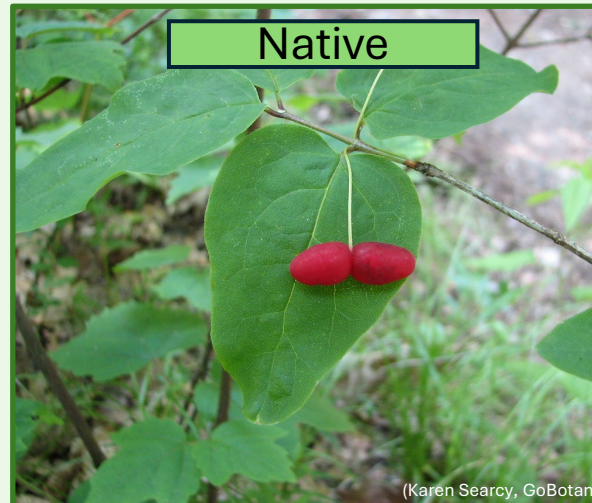
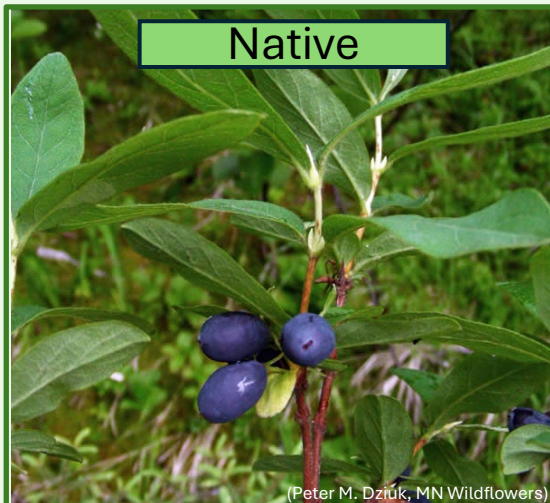
- Leaves opposite, entire, and may have hairs underneath
- Flowers tubular at leaf axils
- Large twigs have hollow pith



Shrubby honeysuckles

Native Look-a-Like:
Fly-honeysuckle,
Mountain honeysuckle

- Solid pith
- Smaller in height
- Different color fruit
- Hairs on margins



VERY
INVASIVE

Autumn olive

Elaeagnus umbellata

- Perennial, shrub, 10-15' tall and wide
- Alternate leaves, underside appears silver or white
- Entire leaf edges but leaves may be crinkly/wavy



(Peter Dziuk, MN Wildflowers),
2010 © Peter Dziuk



(Autumn Olive, MNAP Invasive Plants)



(Peter Dziuk, MN Wildflowers)



(Peter Dziuk, MN Wildflowers)

Autumn olive

Native Look-a-like:
Bebb willow

- Dense hairs on new leaves, lacking scales
- Distinct inflorescence

Native



Invasive



Native



Invasive



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Japanese barberry

Berberis thunbergii

- 1/3 inch spine at leaf axils
- Leaves alternate, rounded and tapered at base
- Flowers and red fruits hang below stem





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SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Glossy buckthorn

Frangula alnus

- Lacks wooden thorn
- Leaves alternate, glossy, entire
- Venation radiates outward from mid-vein
- Fruits red to purple-black



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

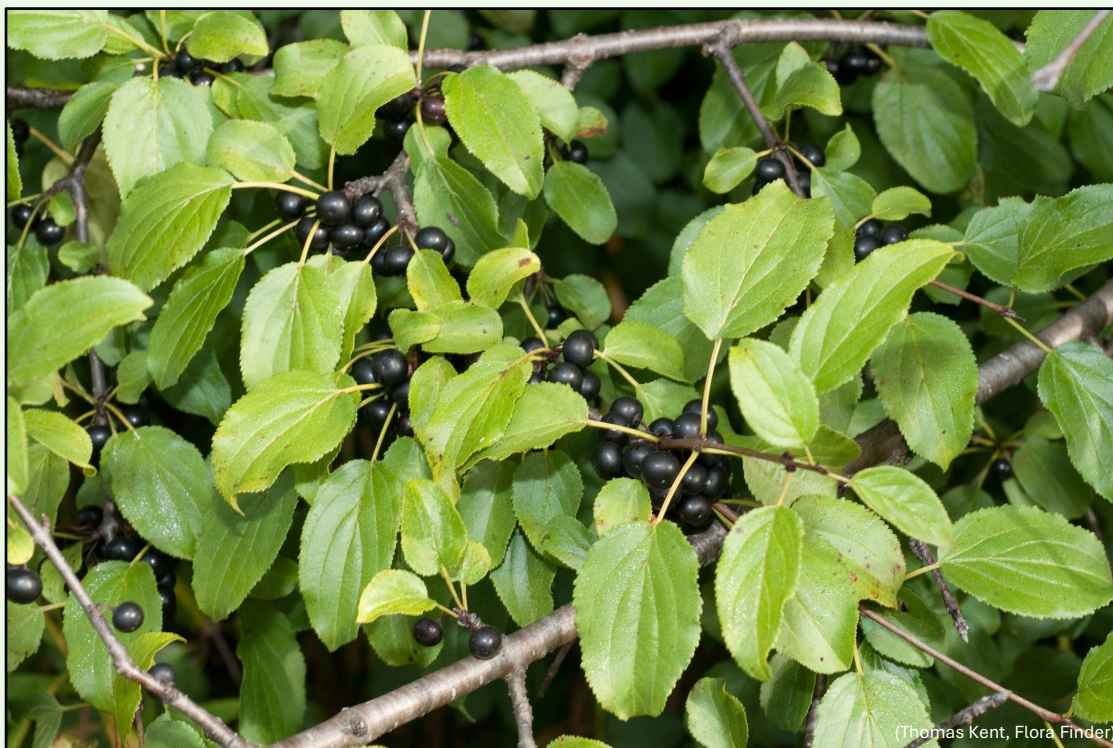
Common buckthorn

Rhamnus cathartica

- Perennial, deciduous shrub or small tree; up to 25 feet high
- Leaves are simple, sub-opposite, toothed
- Shiny gray to brown bark with light-colored lenticels, orange inner bark on older growth



(Common Buckthorn, MNAP) 5456183



(Thomas Kent, Flora Finder)



Chris Evans, University of Illinois | 1334009

Common buckthorn

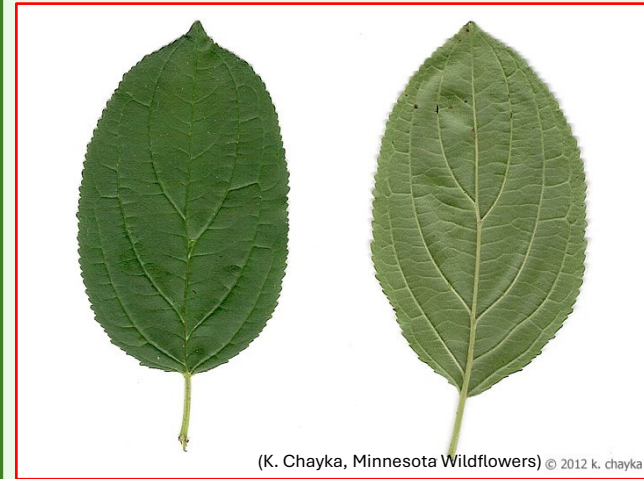
Native Look-a-like: **Alder-leaved buckthorn**

- 5-8 pairs of parallel leaf veins
- Low shrub (<4'), only found in wetlands
- Lacks thorns

Native



Invasive



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Burning bush

Euonymus alatus

- Perennial, deciduous shrub, broadly branched, up to ~15' tall
- Simple, opposite, usually 1-2" long, finely toothed. Vivid red fall color
- Stems frequently have corky "wings"



(Euonymus Alatus, White Oak Nursery)



(Winged euonymus, Mass Audubon)



(Winged Euonymus, iNaturalist)

SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Black swallowwort

Cynanchum louiseae

- Perennial vine growing up to 6' long
- Opposite lance to heart-shaped leaves that turn yellow in fall
- 6-10 5-pointed dark purple flowers at leaf axils
- 1-3" long green pods
- Stems have fine hairs



SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Common reed

Phragmites australis

- 6-13' tall perennial grass
- Long alternate blueish-green leaves are widest in the middle
- Large seed heads persist through winter
- Round hollow stem with nodes



Common reed

Native Look-a-like:
American reed

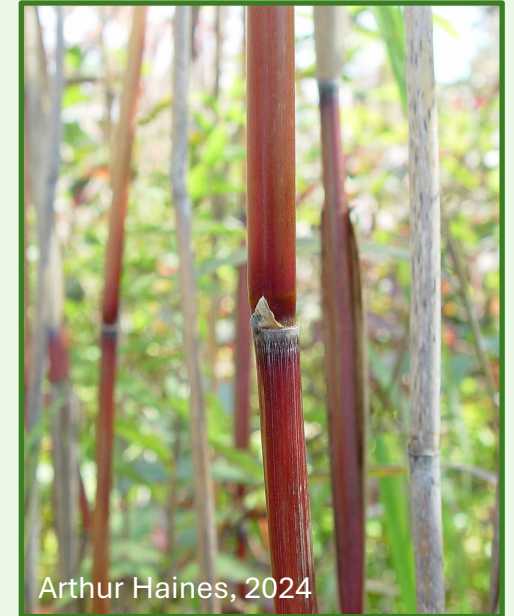
- Small stands
- Only grows up to 6'
- Smooth reddish middle and upper internodes during growing season

Invasive



Arthur Haines, 2024

Invasive



Arthur Haines, 2024

Native



VERY
INVASIVE

Purple loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

- Upright hardy perennial, bushy, up to 6 feet tall
- Leaves are opposite or whorled; linear shape and entire margins, sessile
- Four-sided stem



(Linda Wilson, University of Ohio)



© 2006 Katy Chayka

(Katy Chayka, Minnesota Wildflowers)



(Lethbridge Research Center, Ag and Ag-Food Canada)

Purple loosestrife

Native Look-a-like:
Fireweed

- Round Stem
- Alternate leaves
- Large, four petalled flowers



(Ashley Adamant, Practical Self Reliance)

Native



(Kate MacQuarrie, PEI Untamed)

Native



(Kate MacQuarrie, PEI Untamed)

Invasive



Fireweed, *Chamaenerion angustifolium* Photo: Kate MacQuarrie

Native



Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria* Photo: Kate MacQuarrie

(Kate MacQuarrie, PEI Untamed)

Invasive

SEVERELY
INVASIVE

Japanese knotweed

Fallopia japonica

- Robust, very tall (to 10') perennial herb growing in dense stands
- Leaves are simple, alternate, entire, flat at base and tapering to pointed tip
- Stems are 1-2' diameter, round, hollow



Thank you!

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Have a Question?

Visit maine.gov/dacf/mnap
under the Invasive Species tab, or email
invasives.MNAP@maine.gov

See an invasive? Make a FREE account at
imapinvasives.org and upload your
sightings through the app or website