

Detailed Buckthorn Control Direction

You may be surprised and overwhelmed by the amount of buckthorn on your property. But it can be done! You'll need a plan and persistence.

When to remove buckthorn

The most effective time to remove buckthorn is in the fall and winter. Nearby valuable plants are dormant and will not be damaged by trampling and (if using) herbicide use. During this time its sap- and any herbicide you use- is descending into the roots.

Removal Priorities

Your **first priority** should be buckthorn that is producing berries (female plants). This immediately stops the dissemination of more buckthorn berries to nearby areas.

Your **second priority** should be seedlings or small buckthorn plants.

Your **third priority** can be an area in which buckthorn is not too dense. Start with the seedlings first, then larger shrubs.

Removal Methods

Remove small plants by the roots either by pulling by hand or use an Uprooter (www.uprooter.com) or other weed wrenches. Remove by pulling out by the root, usually when the stem is 3/8" or smaller in diameter. Moist soil helps to ease removal. Pull slowly and evenly to remove to the end of the root system as it can run shallowly beneath the soil for several feet. These areas will not require herbicides and should not re-sprout if you've removed the entire root. Tamp down the disturbed soil after you've uprooted the plants.

We have an Uprooter for you to "try before you buy". Contact us at info@ancientoaksfoundation.org for details.

Cut larger plants (over 1-2 inch diameter) with hand tools such as hand pruners, loppers pruning saws, or gas powered brush cutters, leaving a 1-2 inch high stump. If using a chain saw, follow all safety precautions, and use protective personal equipment.

Methods to prevent resprouting

It is an exercise in futility to cut buckthorn and not treat the stumps. Buckthorn emits a chemical called emodin, which, when the plant is injured, sends the signal to begin producing resprouts- sometimes as many as 25 or 30 within the first year after cutting. You will not escape this and will be well served to treat the stumps using the methods listed here:

Chemical Control

Brush or spray each stump with an undiluted herbicide containing triclopyr or glyphosate at the highest concentration you can find. Some examples that can be found at local home centers and hardware stores:

Roundup Concentrate Plus (18% glyphosate)

Ortho Weed B Gone (8% triclopyr)

Ortho Poison Ivy Killer (8% triclopyr) There are other brand names- purchase the highest concentration you can find.

Assemble your tools:

Old jar/ plastic container with a wide mouth

Old paint brush

PPE- long sleeves, water resistant gloves, eye protection

Pour a small amount of herbicide into an old jar/plastic container or spray bottle that has been labeled with contents for safety.

If using a spray bottle, simply pour in the undiluted herbicide and reattach the sprayer nozzle.

Always follow label instructions for herbicide disposal and store any excess in the original bottle or a clearly marked container with a lid.

Paint or spray the herbicide onto the cut surface of the stump concentrating attention to the outside ring of bark (cambium) where new growth occurs. On larger stumps you do not need to soak the whole stump as no sap moves in the center of the tree- only the outer ring. Avoid soaking the soil near the stump. **Treat each stump**. If you miss some you will find out which ones when they resprout- and they will!

Non- Chemical control

If you don't want to use chemicals on your property there are non-chemical control options. These methods take longer to achieve plant death and can be unsightly but, if done properly can be effective. Simply cover each cut stump down to the soil with a used can or black plastic bag such as a "Buckthorn Baggie"(www.buckthornbaggie.com) to prevent re-sprouting. Use nails to affix the can or a tie to affix the black plastic. Leave in place for one to two years.

Disposal of brush piles

Dispose of cut brush following your municipalities regulations for disposing of yard waste. If allowed in your area, brush piles can be burned. If you have a large amount of cut brush, local lawn care and tree companies will remove it for a fee. We recommend Davey Tree Experts in Long Grove. [Davey Tree Services In Barrington, IL | Davey Tree](#)

Follow-up control

Buckthorn seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to five years and resprouts can happen, even with stump treatment. During the growing season, do a monthly review of the restored area and remove any resprouts that may have escaped treatment.

Replacing buckthorn with native plants

Consider replacing buckthorn with native plants, shrubs and trees. The Chicago Regional Tree Initiative provides an extensive list of replacement native shrubs that work well in our midwestern landscape. [Brochure-11x17-Healthy-Hedges-update-20190412.pdf \(chicagorti.org\)](#)

Additional information:

[Educational Materials Teach Residents How to Remove Buckthorn - General News - News | Lake County Forest Preserves \(lcfpd.org\)](#)

[removing buckthorn - Bing video](#)