



# Invasive Plant Alert<sup>1</sup>

## Amur Honeysuckle

*Lonicera maackii* Rupr.

This is one of a handful of “bush honeysuckles” *Lonicera maackii* is an increasing threat throughout the Eastern half of the U.S. and is listed as a noxious weed in a number of states. Within deciduous forests, dense thickets form canopies that can out-compete tree seedlings, shrubs and wildflowers.



Figure 1 *L. maackii*, flowers. Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

## Where to Look

Amur honeysuckle is predominantly found in forested areas and open woodlands, but is adaptable to a wide range of conditions including fields and other disturbed areas. Native to Asia this species was originally introduced into the U.S. as an ornamental plant in the 1850s. It is widespread throughout the Eastern half of the U.S. and has been verified in almost all of the Mid-Atlantic States.

## Identifying the Plant

Amur honeysuckle is a large, multi-stemmed deciduous, shrub that can grow up to 15 ft.

tall. Leaves (2-3 in. long and 0.5-1.5 in. wide) are opposite, ovate and last into winter. The species is one of the first shrubs to leaf out in spring.

Fragrant flowers develop in early summer and range from white to yellow. They are tubular in shape (0.75-1.0 in. long) with four upper petal lobes that are fused at the bottom. Red fleshy berries appear in the fall, and are consumed by birds which then further spread the seeds. Branches are slender and grayish-brown, with hollow pith, but solid at the nodes. Bark is grayish-brown with deep fissures and scaly ridges.



Figure 2 *L. maackii*, berries. Chuck Barger, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

## How to get rid of it

Amur honeysuckle produces many seeds that can be widely dispersed by birds and other mammals. Seeds can germinate in a wide range of conditions. Hand removal of seedlings or small plants is possible with

limited populations, although the soil should be disturbed as little as possible to avoid re-invasion. In shaded conditions, repeated clipping to the ground level during the growing season can be effective. Weed wrenches may be used on larger plants, however all roots should be removed to avoid re-sprouting.

Prescribed burning has shown some effectiveness in open areas by top-killing the plants. Multiple burns may be required to control re-sprouting.

Where appropriate, chemical control, including the use of glyphosate and triclopyr. Foliar sprays can be used for large thickets. Application to cut stumps can be used for individual plants or in cases where the presence of desirable species precludes the foliar spraying. Finally, herbicides can also be applied to basal parts of the plant as long as the ground is not frozen. To maximize effectiveness, initial control efforts should be applied early in the season prior to the plants setting seed.

## Resources

Pennsylvania DCNR Species Management and Control Information. [http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/bush\\_honeysuckles\\_M\\_C.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/bush_honeysuckles_M_C.htm)

<sup>1</sup> This species has been identified as a potential or emerging threat to natural areas in the mid-Atlantic region