

Bush Honeysuckle Eradication

THE PROBLEM

Exotic bush honeysuckles, specifically Morrow's and Amur, can rapidly invade and overtake a site, forming a dense shrub layer that crowds and shades out native plant species. They alter habitats by decreasing light availability, by depleting soil moisture and nutrients, and possibly by releasing toxic chemicals that prevent other plant species from growing in the vicinity. Exotic bush honeysuckles may compete with native bush honeysuckles for pollinators, resulting in a reduced seed set for native species. In addition, the fruits of exotic bush honeysuckles, while abundant and rich in carbohydrates, do not offer migrating birds the high-fat, nutrient-rich food sources needed for long flights, that are supplied by native plant species.

BACKGROUND

Exotic bush honeysuckles were originally introduced from Asia for use as ornamentals, for wildlife cover and for soil erosion control.

HABITAT

Exotic bush honeysuckles are relatively shade-intolerant and most often occur in forest edge, abandoned field, pasture, roadsides and other open, upland habitats. Woodlands, especially those that have been grazed or otherwise disturbed, may also be invaded by exotic bush honeysuckles.

BIOLOGY & SPREAD

Open-grown exotic bush honeysuckles fruit prolifically and are highly attractive to birds. In the eastern United States, over twenty species of birds feed on the persistent fruits and widely disseminate seeds across the landscape. In established populations, vegetative sprouting also aids in the persistence of these exotic shrubs.

What SLAS is Doing

St. Louis Audubon was an early supporter of the bush honeysuckle eradication project in Forest Park's Kennedy Woods and continues to support the annual effort to remove invasive honeysuckle from the rest of the Park.

The Chapter has also coordinated or supported other honeysuckle projects around the STL Metro, including Ruth Park Woods and very soon at Creve Coeur Lake Park.

What YOU Can Do

- Watch our website for honeysuckle work days and volunteer!
- Do not let exotic bush honeysuckle become established in your yard and remove it if it has already done so. See the links below to be sure you have properly identified it and follow the best practices for removal.
- Talk to your neighbors who have infestations and help them understand the problem.
- Our Native Plants and Animals Thank You!

The Missouri Dept of Conservation's (MDC) honeysuckle brochure--

<http://mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/Documents/15700.pdf>.

MDC's vegetation management guideline <http://mdc.mo.gov/nathis/exotic/vegman/six.htm>.

Plant Conservation Alliance site <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/Ioni1.htm>.

Kennedy Woods Advisory Group <http://www.treeswallow.com/honeysuckle/index.html>.