

DECLARED PLANT

Italian buckthorn *Rhamnus alaternus*

January 2015

Italian buckthorn is a large shrub or small tree with red to black berries.

It is now declared under the *Natural Resources Management Act 2004*, with prohibition on sale throughout South Australia and enforced control in the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges, Eyre Peninsula, Kangaroo Island, SA Murray-Darling Basin and South East NRM regions.

- **Other Common names:** buckthorn, blowfly bush, evergreen buckthorn.
- **Family:** Rhamnaceae
- **Origin:** Native to Southern Europe, north-western Africa & western Asia.
- Italian buckthorn was popular as a hedge plant and garden ornamental from colonial times and has escaped from cultivation.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Italian buckthorn is a woody weed that threatens native biodiversity in coastal and inland areas.

- invades coastal dunes and cliffs, melaleuca swamps, forests and woodlands
- forms dense, evergreen canopies that shade out native understorey plants



Italian buckthorn - Biosecurity SA



Red berries ripening to black - Biosecurity SA



Italian buckthorn flowers - David Blewett



Italian buckthorn flower buds - David Blewett

For more information

Contact your local Natural Resources Centre for information on controlling declared weeds:

www.naturalresources.sa.gov.au

Further weed control information is also available at:

www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa

DESCRIPTION

Habit: large shrub or small tree growing to 5 m high. **Leaves:** alternately arranged, leathery, dark green leaves, with paler undersides, prominent veins and finely serrated margins. **Stems:** juvenile stems are smooth, greenish and often finely haired, becoming furrowed and grey-brown when mature. **Flowers:** clusters of small, star-shaped, yellow-green flowers, with 5 petals up to 3 mm long are borne in the leaf forks. **Flowering time:** late winter to early spring. **Fruit:** red, round berries 3-5 mm which change to black over summer.

HOW IT SPREADS

Disperses by seed which is spread by birds and other fruit consumers such as possums. Dumping of garden waste with fruits present can also start new infestations.

HABITAT

Buckthorn can be found growing in riparian vegetation, roadsides, disturbed sites, rocky outcrops, open woodland and grasslands, dry sclerophyll forests, and coastal areas in temperate regions.

DISTRIBUTION

Italian buckthorn is recorded from Eyre Peninsula, Yorke Peninsula, Southern Lofty, Kangaroo Island, South East, Murray Mallee, Northern Lofty, Flinders Ranges. Also naturalised in Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Seek control advice if you have this weed. Select alternatives to replace invasive garden plants. Read 'Grow Me Instead' for suggestions.

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