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OTHER COMMON NAMES: Elaeagnus, Oleaster, Japanese Silverberry

DESCRIPTION

A deciduous shrub or small tree that grows to approximately 20 feet in height. Its leaves are dark green, alternate, and oval to lanceolate, and untoothed; the undersides are covered with silver-white scales. Small, light yellow flowers grow from twigs early in the growing season, after the leaves have appeared (May to June). The shrub produces a large quantity of small, round, juicy berries that are reddish to pink and dotted with scales when mature (September to October).

Autumn olive is often confused with its relative, Russian olive, which is also considered an invasive species. Russian olive can be differentiated from autumn olive by its thorny branches and yellow, dry, and mealy berries. Please report both autumn and Russian olive.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- deciduous shrub or small tree
- smooth oval leaves with silvery scales on the bottom
- small yellow flowers May to June
- small red berries September to October

WHEN TO FIND AUTUMN OLIVE

It can be found year-round. From May to June, look for the small, yellow flowers; from September through October, look for the red berries.

WHERE TO FIND AUTUMN OLIVE

It grows well in infertile soils, and is usually found in disturbed areas, pastures, fields, and along roadsides.

WHAT TO DO. Do not attempt to control this tree. Instead, mark the location with a GPS or on a map and take a photograph. Collect a stem with leaves flowers or berries for positive identification.

This fact sheet was produced by The Nature Conservancy in Oregon's Weed Watchers Program.

Autumn Olive

Elaeagnus umbellata

Autumn olive is native to East Asia and was introduced to the United States in the 1830s. It has now invaded most of the eastern and central part of the country. It is just beginning to get a foot hold in Oregon, with scattered populations in the Willamette Valley. It has not yet been detected in the Portland area, according to the USDA Plants database.

The shrub reproduces by seed, and each tree produces a large amount of them (two to eight pounds). Seeds are mainly distributed by birds, which have a taste for the berries.

Due to its prolific fruiting, rapid growth, dispersal by birds, and adaptability to invade many different habitats, autumn olive has the potential of becoming a troublesome shrub in Oregon. It is capable of out-competing and suppressing the growth of native plants, and, because of its nitrogen-fixing capabilities, it is able to adversely affect the nitrogen cycle of native communities that might depend on infertile soil.

REFERENCES

US Forest Service Invasive Plants Website:
http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/autumn-olive.pdf

Sather, N., N. Eckardt, Element Stewardship Abstract for Autumn Olive. Published by The Nature Conservancy's Global Invasive Species Initiative. On line at:
<http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/elaeumbe.html>



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