

Buckthorn

Buckthorn is an invasive, non-native small tree infesting many forested areas. If left unmanaged, buckthorn out-competes native species and becomes the dominant plant in forest understories and woodland edges. It is nearly impossible to walk through buckthorn infested areas and buckthorn has little wildlife value. Buckthorn is native to Europe and was brought to the U.S. as a landscape plant in the late 1800s.

Buckthorn is generally removed in one of two ways, either pulled or dug out of the ground; or cut off at ground level. Smaller plants, less than 2.5” diameter, are the most feasible to pull or dig out, which removes the majority of the root system and eliminates the need for stump treatment. Larger plants, greater than 2.5” diameter, are usually best handled by cutting off at ground level and immediately following up with a chemical stump treatment to kill the root system. Products such as *Brush Be Gone* (active ingredient triclopyr) or *Roundup* (active ingredient glyphosate) are effective for treating buckthorn stumps, and available at most yard and garden supply stores. Read the product label to ensure buckthorn stump use is listed. Herbicides for killing grass and weeds are **not** effective for killing buckthorn root systems. *ALWAYS READ THE PRODUCT LABEL AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS WHEN USING CHEMICALS.*

Apple Valley residents can use, free of charge, a City-owned tool for pulling buckthorn plants from the ground. These tools are designed for pulling buckthorn plants up to 2.5” in diameter. A deposit is required at the time of tool pickup, and returned when the tool is brought back.

The City no longer offers free buckthorn pickup, that program has been discontinued. Following are suggested options for disposal of removed buckthorn:

- Removed buckthorn plants pose no threat of spreading or impacting the environment. Buckthorn is about the same density as hickory and can be used for firewood.
- Refuse haulers provide convenient and affordable yard waste service for residents. Most haulers can provide both a weekly yard waste collection service throughout the growing season and an on-call service to collect yard waste materials. Contact your hauler for specifics relating to brush disposal.
- Buckthorn trunks and branches can be chipped on site and the chips used safely for mulch. The City maintains a list of tree work contractors licensed in Apple Valley which is available upon request.
- Buckthorn materials, including stumps, can be disposed of at most compost sites. The Wood Mulch Store located in Empire Township accepts buckthorn materials. Details can be found on their website. <http://www.mulchstoremn.com/empire.html>

For additional information call the Natural Resources Division at 952-953-2400, or visit the Mn DNR website at www.dnr.state.mn.us