

INVASIVE SPECIES

MICHIGAN'S BIGGEST PROBLEM

But Who is dealing with this problem?

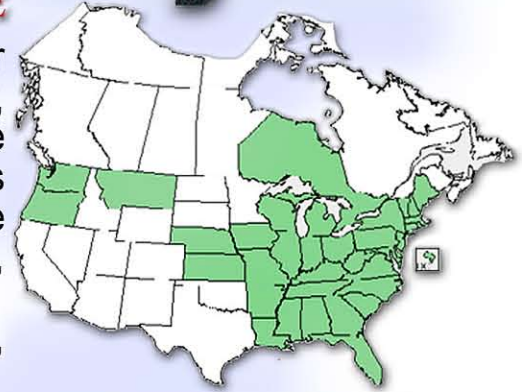
BY: **Rob Golda**
HIKING MICHIGAN

“AUTUMN OLIVE”

Elaeagnus umbellata

VOLUNTEERS to the RESCUE

Autumn olive is a medium to large deciduous shrub. The upper surface of the leaves are dark green to grayish-green in color, while the lower surface is covered with silvery white scales. The small, light yellow flowers are borne along twigs after the leaves have appeared early in the growing season, May - June, and are very fragrant. The fruits are small, round, juicy, reddish to pink, dotted with scales and are produced in great quantity. The remnant spur branches of this bush, look & feel like thorns, making it very difficult to just push aside, or trough them in the wild.



Silvery colored leaves

Autumn olive exhibits prolific fruiting, rapid growth, is widely dispersed by birds and can thrive in poor soil. It has the ability to produce up to 80 pounds of fruit in a single season. Due to its nitrogen fixing capabilities, it has the capacity to adversely affect the nitrogen cycle of the native communities that may depend on infertile soils. It also creates heavy shade which suppresses plants that require direct sunlight. Autumn olive is found in disturbed areas, along roadsides, in pastures, fields and sparse woodlands. It is often found in poor soils due to its nitrogen-fixing root nodules that allow it to tolerate poor conditions. It can also survive the effects of salt, drought and pHs as low as 4.0. However, it does not grow well in wet habitats or in dense forests. It is Volunteer groups that remove and deal with this plant, state-wide, and not the DNR.



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PLANT REMOVAL

**Hand pulling autumn olive seedlings can be effective. However, mowing or cutting autumn olive plants can cause vigorous resprouting. Even repeated cutting is usually ineffective without treating stumps and/or resprouts with herbicide.*



Spotted Berries

Autumn olive is probably the worst Invasive plant that grows in Michigan. It has found more thyn a foot-hold almost everywhere. It lines almost every open field and meadow in the state, as well as the road-side to every expressway and county road. This is truly enemy number one on Michigan's Invasive Species HIT LIST.