



NRM Plan

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This fact sheet was produced
with the support of the
Australian Government's Caring
for Our Country program.



June 2011

Italian buckthorn (*Rhamnus alaternus*)

Reducing its impact in the Northern and Yorke NRM Region

Description of this weed

Buckthorn is a 3-5 metre tall small shrub with bright green leathery leaves which are lance-oval shape, with finely serrated margins. The leaf's upper surface is bright green, with the underside being paler in colour.

The stems are smooth, not thorny as its common name suggests. Flowers are small, 3-4mm in diameter, with 5 petals and are yellow-green in colour. Flowering occurs in winter to early spring.

Fruits are round, egg-shaped berries, smooth, 5-7mm long, red ripening to black.

Buckthorn is generally found in areas receiving greater than 500mm of rain.

Why is it a weed and what is the impact?

Buckthorn was introduced to Australia as a garden plant and has escaped into the bush. It is a hardy plant that will grow in a variety of soil types including riparian environments, sand dunes and escarpments. It tolerates full sun, cold and seasonal dry spells.



Buckthorn is spread by birds eating the fruit and dispersing the seeds. Foxes and possums also have the potential to spread the seeds. It suckers freely from a base or roots, especially from inappropriately dumped garden waste.

Buckthorn shades out ground covers, impedes natural growth and regeneration of native species in bushland.



What can you do? – Some methods of control

Mechanical

Seedlings are best hand pulled, ensuring roots are completely removed. Removal of larger plants is possible with the right equipment e.g. tree puller

Chemical

Mature plants can be controlled by either the cut and swab or drill and fill techniques using a non-selective herbicide. This chemical control is best done in spring. Chemical follow up treatment is required as plants will re-shoot.

Spraying is not recommended in areas of native vegetation due to off target damage.

Help and Assistance NRM Authorised Officers

Snowtown – 8865 2166

Riverton – 8847 2544

Minlaton – 8853 2795

Port Augusta – 8641 1513

Peterborough – 8651 3577

Orroroo – 8658 1086

