

## Invasive Plant Species in Chester

**Common Name:** Burning Bush, Winged Euonymous

**Scientific Name:** *Euonymus alatus*

**Origin:** China, Korea, Japan

**General Information:** Burning Bush was introduced to the United States around 1860 as an ornamental plant for use in landscaping. Despite its invasive nature, it is still very popular and sold for its winged stems, hardiness and bright red autumn color. Often this shrub is used as a hedge and trimmed box-like.

Birds love the prolific red fruit and disperse the seeds to new locations. Burning Bush spreads into both intact and disturbed forests and floodplains forming dense thickets making it difficult to remove. It can replace native woody and herbaceous plants.

**Identification:** Multiple stemmed shrub with winged stems, 5-10 feet tall.

**Leaves:** deciduous, dark green in pairs along the stem, turn bright red in the autumn.

**Flowers, fruits:** small greenish flowers in late spring and red-purple fruits maturing over the summer.

**Control:** Please DO NOT PLANT this shrub. It is still available at many garden centers, presumably because there are sterile or non-aggressive cultivars, but some states like New Hampshire have prohibited its use. Pulling or digging out small seedlings can be done by hand. Larger shrubs need to be cut down and then the roots dug up or carefully treated with an herbicide like glyphosate.

**Native Alternatives:** Highbush blueberry, American cranberry bush, Red chokeberry and Fothergilla.

### References:

<https://extension.psu.edu/burning-bush>

Mistaken Identity - Invasive Plants and their Native Look-Alikes (published by Delaware Department Agriculture. [https://www.nybg.org/files/scientists/rnaczi/Mistaken\\_Identity\\_Final.pdf](https://www.nybg.org/files/scientists/rnaczi/Mistaken_Identity_Final.pdf).

Photo 1. Burning bush planted as ornamental shrub. Photo by Felise Cressman, Native and Invasive Plant Subcommittee.





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Photo 2. Burning bush infestation in woodland.



Photo 3. Leaves, twigs and flowers. Photo by Richard Gardner, Bugwood.org.



Photo 4. Fruit. Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff. University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org.

