
Autumn & Russian Olive

Elaeagnus umbellata, *Elaeagnus angustifolia*



Two plants with similar features and similar problems.

Elaeagnus umbellata is a **very invasive** shrub in Maine that leafs out in mid-March and stays in leaf late, shading out desirable plants. It grows 5-15' high and even wider.

- Leaves are bright green above, but silvery beneath, staggered along the stems. The leaves are twice as long as wide, and wavy.
- Stems are brown with visible small glands, sometimes spiny.
- Flowers are tubular and 4-petaled, white to creamy yellow in little clusters at leaf bases, fragrant, in late May-June.
- Fruits are oblong, silvery with brown scales, ¼" or so, then mature to bright red in September-October.

Elaeagnus angustifolia is a large shrub or tree up to 35' tall. While not invasive yet, it closely behaves like its relative *E. umbellata*. Beware of this plant.

- Leaves are willow-like with silvery scales on both sides, 1-4" long.
 - Stems are silvery and fuzzy, often with stiff thorns.
 - Flowers are fragrant, silver and yellow.
 - Fruits are ½" long, and covered by silver scales.
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Russian olive, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* can be 35'

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E. angustifolia thorns are sharp! Stems are silver & fuzzy

HOW TO CONTROL:

- Pull or dig small plants any time the soil is wet. Tamp soil afterward. Roots will re-sprout.
- For larger bushes, cut in late summer and, if beyond 25' from water, immediately paint cut stems with 25-50% glyphosate or triclopyr. Repeat or spray leaf-sprouts with 2%-5% glyphosate.

NOTE: Cutting without herbicide treatment will stimulate re-sprouting. Also, spraying leaf re-sprouts does not always work.

Sources

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https://wiki.bugwood.org/Elaeagnus_angustifolia;
<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2525e/>;
<https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/AutumnOliveBCP.pdf>

Controls

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/elaeagnus.htm;
Casco Bay Invasive Species Network, Winning the War on Weeds,
<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2525e/>;
<https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/AutumnOliveBCP.pdf>
