

Amur honeysuckle [*Lonicera maackii* (Rupr.) Herder]

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Fig. 1. Amur honeysuckle is a deciduous shrub.

Fig. 2. Amur honeysuckle has tan bark.

Fig. 3. Amur honeysuckle leaves have an opposite leaf arrangement.

Introduction

Problems Caused

Amur honeysuckle [*Lonicera maackii* (Rupr.) Herder] is a deciduous shrub native from Manchuria to Korea. It was introduced into cultivation in the United States in the mid 1800s, but escaped. It has been used as an ornamental. Of the Mid-South states, it is most problematic in Tennessee, but can also be found in other MidSouth states. Amur honeysuckle is tolerant of a wide range of conditions, but can completely dominate the understory of deciduous forests.

Regulations

Amur honeysuckle is not regulated in the MidSouth. It is a Class B Noxious weed in Vermont, Prohibited in Massachusetts, and Invasive, banned in Connecticut.

Description

Vegetative Growth

Amur honeysuckle is a large shrub reaching around 12 ft tall and 6 ft wide. Bark is generally tan in color. Leaf arrangement is opposite with simple leaves that are ovate to broadly elliptic and pubescent, 2 to 3 inches long and ½ to 1 ½ inches wide.

Flowering

Flowers are produced in April to early June, white fading to cream in color, 1 inch long, and born in axillary pairs. Fruit are red berries, which vary in size, but generally are around ¼ inch diameter in clusters with one or more seeds. Fruit ripen in October, but may persist until February or March.

Dispersal

The small, red berries of Amur honeysuckle are dispersed primarily by birds.

Spread By

Amur honeysuckle is spread primarily by birds.

Habitat

Amur honeysuckle is a problem in fence rows, abandoned pastures, fields, roadsides, forest, roadside margins, and open woodlands. It can tolerate a wide range of light and moisture conditions and form dense thickets in forest, replacing the surrounding native vegetation. Although these thickets may provide habitat and some food for certain wildlife, they are a difficult barrier for human activity. Seeds can be spread by birds over some distance to new sites.

Distribution

United States

Amur honeysuckle is widespread in the eastern United States, but apparently not escaped in the Western Plains or Rocky Mountains. In the right habitat it can be very common in certain eastern states, particularly in deciduous forests of the Northeast. It is considered hardy in the United States from Zone 3 to 8. It is still sold occasionally for landscapes, although it is regulated in some states.

MidSouth

Amur honeysuckle is widespread in Tennessee, but mostly restricted to a few northern counties in Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Since it continues to spread, its full range of adaptation is not known.

Control Methods

Biological

No biological controls are currently available for Amur honeysuckle.

Chemical

Tordon RTU, glyphosate, Arsenal, and Garlon 4 can be used for chemical control of Amur honeysuckle. Tordon RTU and Garlon 4 can be used for cut surface applications. Garlon 4 can also be used as a basal spray. Glyphosate and Arsenal can be used in low volume applications. Herbicides that are provided here are based on research from the University of Kentucky.

Mechanical

Since Amur honeysuckle is shallow rooted, mechanical removal is feasible. Care should be taken to remove the entire root mass to ensure no resprouting.

Physical

No physical controls are currently recommended for Amur honeysuckle.

Herbicide	Method	Rate
Tordon RTU	Cut surface	100%
Glyphosate	Low volume foliar	2%
Arsenal	Low volume or soil	2 to 6 pt/A or 2%
Garlon 4	Cut surface	15% in oil
	Basal spray	15% in oil

Table 1. Suggested chemical control methods for Amur honeysuckle.

References

- Dirr, Michael A. 1998. Manual of woody landscape plants: Their identification, ornamental characteristics, culture, propagation, and uses, 5th ed. Stipes Publishing LLC., Champaign, IL.
- Miller, James H. 2003. Nonnative invasive plants of southern forests: A field guide for identification and control. Southern Research Station, Asheville, NC.
- USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 6 August 2007). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

More Information

The genus *Lonicera* belongs to the Honeysuckle (Caprifoliaceae) Family. There are about 180 species of *Lonicera* worldwide that are distributed from north temperate regions to Mexico and the Philippines. Some species of *Lonicera* are native to the Mid-South, while other species are not. Native *Lonicera* have flowers that range from yellow to red. Most non-native honeysuckles produce white to yellow flowers, often white fading to yellow. Growth forms are also variable and range from vines like Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* Thunb.) to shrubs like Amur honeysuckle. Species may be deciduous or evergreen. Amur honeysuckle is sometimes confused with other shrub honeysuckles, like Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii* Gray) which has peduncles much longer than the leaf petioles. Tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tartarica* L.) and winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima* Lindl. & Paxton) are more glabrous, lacking the degree of pubescence seen on Amur honeysuckle.

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