

# What's aggressive, persistent and runs rampant through the landscape?

## The Culprit: Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)



*Autumn olive infests fields and woodlands in most of the eastern United States.*

Autumn olive was introduced to North America in the 1830s to revegetate areas with poor soil and to create wildlife habitat.

**Now we know =>**

Autumn olive's fruits are junk food for our native wildlife, especially birds. Poor nutrition slows migration and makes birds vulnerable to other risks.



### Why It's a Problem

- Displaces desirable native plants and reduces diversity
- Increases nitrate levels and thus pollutes streams and rivers
- Changes soil chemicals to help the spread of weedy species
- Poses a serious threat to fragile native plant communities such as rocky barrens and prairies

## What Does It Look Like?



Leaves are 2–4 inches long. The top surface is pale green, while the underside appears silvery



Stems are ashy brown and often have sharp, stout spines. Clusters of four to six brilliantly red fruit form in late summer



Trumpet-shaped, white to pale yellow flowers bloom in spring.  
Each flower has four petals



Grows rapidly and is often multi-stemmed.  
Can reach heights of up to 20 feet and spread 30 feet wide.

## How Do I Control It?

- Individual small plants can be pulled by hand. However, all roots must be removed to prevent resprouting.
- Basal bark and cut stump treatments can be utilized year-round.
- Foliar herbicide treatment is best suited for the summer months.



The cut stump method involves cutting down the plant and then applying herbicide on the stump to prevent regrowth. In the case of autumn olive, there are several stumps to treat.

## Additional Information

### Blue Ridge PRISM

-- [Autumn Olive Fact Sheet](#)

-- [Resources on Invasive Plants](#)



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