

## RHAMNACEAE – BUCKTHORN FAMILY

**Plant:** woody vines, shrubs and trees, rarely herbs

**Stem:** often spiny

**Root:**

**Leaves:** simple, alternate mostly but sometimes opposite; small stipules or no stipules

**Flowers:** mostly perfect, sometimes monoecious or mixed, regular (actinomorphic), solitary or in clusters, small; 5(4) sepals, 5(4) petals or rarely none, often clawed; 5(4) stamens; ovary superior or inferior, 1-5 carpels, usually 3

**Fruit:** berry, capsule, nut, or drupe; often opens in 3 parts

**Other:** widespread in world; common in Calif.; many are cultivated;  
Dicotyledons Group

**Genera:** 50+ genera; locally *Berchemia*, *Ceanothis*, *Rhamnus* (buckthorn)

## **RHAMNACEAE – BUCKTHORN FAMILY**

**New Jersey Tea; *Ceanothus americanus* L.**

**Glossy [European Alder] Buckthorn; *Frangula alnus* P. Mill.**

**Carolina Buckthorn; *Frangula caroliniana* (Walter) A. Gray**

**Common [European] Buckthorn; *Rhamnus cathartica* L. (Introduced)**

# New Jersey Tea

*Ceanothus americanus* L.

Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Kitty Todd Nature Preserve, Lucas County, Ohio

Notes: small shrub; flowers small, mostly white, 5-parts, petals clawed, in panicles of small umbels without bracts, lower peduncles long; leaves elliptical to ovate, pubescent or not (for some a basis for varieties), finely toothed, 3 main nerves from base; fruit 3-lobed; summer

[V Max Brown, 2006]



# Glossy [European Alder]

## Buckthorn

*Frangula alnus* P. Mill.

Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Oak Openings Metropark, Lucas County, Ohio

Notes: shrub to small tree; small 5-lobed flower, greenish white, solitary or in clusters in older leaf axils, long pedicels; leaves ovate (<2x long as wide), entire, 8-10 lateral veins; bark with abundant lenticels; twigs hairy, turning reddish-brown; buds brownish, without scales, hairy; fruit red but turning purplish-black

[V Max Brown, 2007]



# Carolina Buckthorn

*Frangula caroliniana* (Walter) A. Gray

Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Alley Springs, Ozark National Scenic Riverways,  
Shannon County, Missouri

Notes: shrub to small tree; small 5-lobed flower, greenish white, in clusters in older leaf axils; leaves alternate, lanceolate, tapering to base, entire and simple, finely toothed, shiny above; bark fairly smooth, often blotched; twigs hairy early, smooth later; buds hairy, without scales; fruit red but turning black; late spring to early summer

[V Max Brown, 2010]



# Common [European] Buckthorn



*Rhamnus cathartica* L. (Introduced)  
Rhamnaceae (Buckthorn Family)

Irwin Prairie State Nature Preserve, Lucas County, Ohio  
Notes: shrub to small tree; flowers with 4-parts,  
greenish, in clusters in leaf axils; leaves ovate to  
somewhat elliptical, finely toothed, mostly with 3-4 side  
veins; bark rough, horizontal lenticels prominent; some  
twigs tipped with spines; winter buds opposite to  
somewhat opposite or offset, with several scales; fruit a  
black berry

[V Max Brown, 2006]

