

Vermont Invasive Exotic Plant Fact Sheet

Shrubby Honeysuckles

Tatarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica* L.) Morrow honeysuckle (*L. morrowii* A.Gray) Hybrid honeysuckle (*L. x bella* Zabel)
Amur honeysuckle (*L. mackii* Rupr. Maxim)

Honeysuckle Family

Vermont Class B Noxious Weed

Description: Shrubby honeysuckles are upright, coarse, deciduous shrubs that range from a few feet to 16 feet (5 meters) in height. The branches are widely spreading with the older ones being hollow. The opposite, simple leaves are oval to oblong in shape and range in length from 1 to 2.5 inches (2.5-6 cm). The tubular flowers are numerous and occur in pairs on slender stalks. The fruit is a many-seeded, red, orange, or yellow berry.

Tatarian honeysuckle has smooth, hairless leaves and pink or white flowers that do not turn yellow with age. Flower stalks are .5-1 inch (15-25 mm) and smooth.

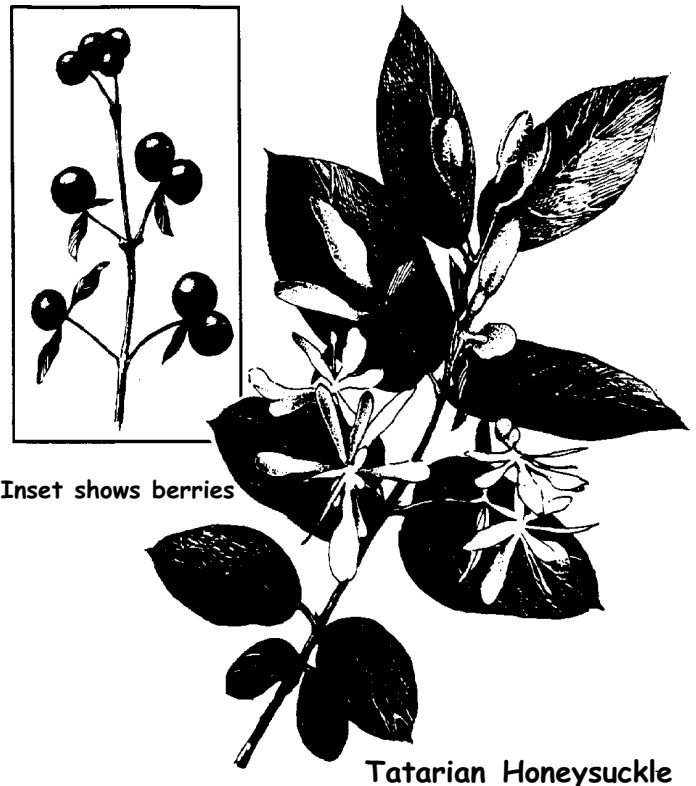
Morrow honeysuckle has downy leaves and white flowers that turn pale yellow as they age. Flower stalks are .2-.5 inches (5-15 mm) and densely hairy.

Bell honeysuckle is a hybrid between Tatarian and Morrow honeysuckles and thus has features intermediate between these 2 species.

Amur honeysuckle has dark green leaves that are hairy on the veins and white flowers that yellow with age.

Habitat: Shrubby honeysuckles occur most often in abandoned fields and pastures, hedge rows, and edges of forest and wetlands, but are also found in forest land, especially where soils are very limey. They are tolerant of varying soil moisture levels and moderate shade, but prefer open areas and achieve the greatest fruit production when in full sun.

Threats: Shrubby honeysuckles can rapidly invade and take over or become a common component of a site or natural community. They form a dense shrub layer that interferes with the life cycles of many native woody and herbaceous plants, including rare species. They can alter habitats or natural communities they invade by decreasing



Inset shows berries

Tatarian Honeysuckle

(Illustration by David [Randy] Kleinman, courtesy of the US Army Corps of Engineers.)

Threats continued: light availability. The fruit of shrubby honeysuckles is fed upon by many birds and possibly small mammals. The birds then spread the seed throughout the landscape, making control difficult.

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Shrubby Honeysuckles Honeysuckle Family (*Caprifoliaceae*)

Distribution: All of the exotic shrubby honeysuckles are highly invasive or have the potential to be so in the state. In Vermont, Tatarian honeysuckle, Morrow honeysuckle and Bell honeysuckle are, as a group, common in the Champlain Lowlands and sprading up the Connecticut Valley. The relative abundance of each species in these areas is not well known. Amur honeysuckle is less common than the other shrubby honeysuckles, and we are unaware of it's present distribution.

At least one or more of the species of shrubby honeysuckles are now naturalized (established and reproducing) throughout much of the northeastern U.S. While complete eradication will never be possible, control in certain areas is desirable. These invasive honeysuckles are native to Europe, eastern Asia and Japan. Tatarian honeysuckle was introduced to this continent in 1752. The other species arrived later, and introductions continue even today. As recently as the 1980s they were promoted for their wildlife values, ornamental use, and for soil stabilization.

Control: Care should be taken not to confuse the exotic shrubby honeysuckles with our native shrubs, especially fly honeysuckle (*Lonicera canadensis*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). Light infestation may be cleared by hand with a shovel or hoe provided the entire root is removed. Severe infestations have been controlled by repeated removal, burning or glyphosate herbicide applications. Cutting plants should be done in early spring and in late summer or early fall. Cutting of mature plants results in resprouting, but may temporarily reduce seed sources. Seedlings are easily pulled. If prescribed burning is appropriate for the area, it should be conducted during the growing season. Control methods must be repeated for a period of 3 to 5 years to inhibit growth of new shoots and eradicate target plants.

References:

- Anonymous. 1990. *Vegetation Management Manual*. Illinois Nature Preserves Commission.
- Brunelle, H.J. 1996. *Invasive Plant Information Sheet: Bush Honeysuckles*. The Nature Conservancy of Connecticut, Middleton, Connecticut.
- Converse, C.K. 1985. *Element Stewardship Abstract for Lonicera tatarica, L. morrowii, and L.x bella*. The Nature Conservancy. Unpublished document.
- Williams, C. 1994. *Vegetation Management Guideline: Bush Honeysuckles*. Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and Virginia Plant Society.



For more information about Vermont's invasive exotic plant species or if you would like to know how you can help, please contact:

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