

Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)

Description

Autumn olive is a deciduous shrub from 0.9 - 6.1 m in height. Leaves are dark green, alternate, oval to lanceolate, and un-toothed. The underside is covered with silver-white scales. Small, light yellow flowers are abundant and occur in clusters near the stems in May to June. Fruits are red to pink, juicy, and



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edible. The small fruits are dotted with scales, and produced in great quantity (about 8 lbs/shrub). Plants flower and develop fruits annually after reaching three years of age.

Elaeagnus spp. among the few non-legumes that fix nitrogen in the soil by means of bacterial root nodes.

Key Identifiers

- ✓ It is easily recognized by the silvery, dotted underside of the leaves.
- ✓ Leaves often have a slightly wavy margin.
- ✓ Silvery scales cover the young stems, leaves, flowers, and fruit.
- ✓ Many red to pink berries in the fall.

Location in Canada

Not known to be in Alberta but is present in Ontario, Quebec, NB, NS and Nfld. Large infestations occur in the south eastern United States.

Resources

<http://nativeplants.evergreen.ca/search/view-plant.php?ID=06215>

<http://www.naturalbiodiversity.org/biobullies/downloads/Autumn%20olive.pdf>

Similar species

Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) - which is also an invasive species and commonly sold as an ornamental in Alberta. Russian olive has elliptic to lanceolate leaves, its branches are usually thorny, and its fruit is yellow, dry and mealy.

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/live/ec167/build/ec167.pdf>

Silver-berry (*Elaeagnus commutata*) a native to Alberta has brown young twigs, fruit is silvery and dry

<http://linnet.geog.ubc.ca/Atlas/Atlas.aspx?sciname=Elaeagnus+commutata>