

Weeds in the Garden

Tartarian Honeysuckle

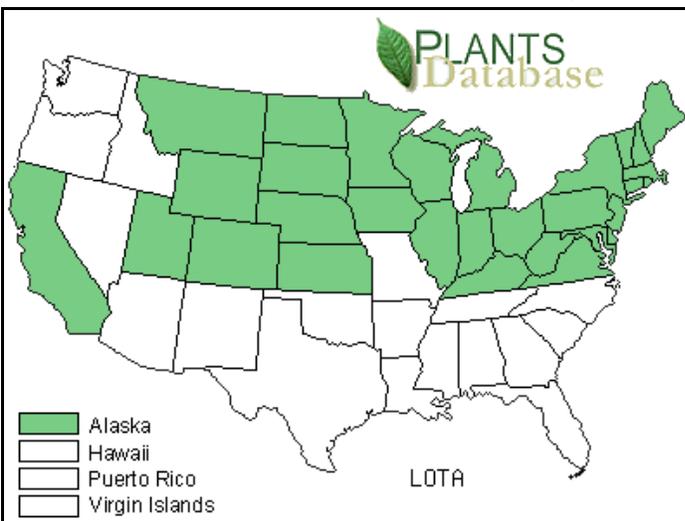
Common Name: Tartarian honeysuckle

Scientific Name: *Lonicera tatarica*

Characteristics: Tartarian honeysuckle has smooth bluish-green leaves and grows as a shrub of three to ten feet in height. Its leaves are entire, egg or heart shaped and grow in pairs along the branch. The older stems are hollow. Flowers bloom in May or June and are pink in color. Flowers are shaped like small trumpets. The berries are a deep red.

Origin: Tartarian honeysuckle was introduced in 1752 as an ornamental plant. It arrived in Michigan around 1890. A native to Asia and Western Europe, this honeysuckle thrives on sunny upland sites.

Current range: Tartarian honeysuckle is found from New England south to North Carolina, and west to Iowa.



Habitat: Tartarian honeysuckle is most often found near large urban areas but it has moved into rural areas, particularly where it was planted for wildlife cover or food. It grows on forest edges, roadsides, pastures and abandoned fields. It can also be found around bogs, fens, and lakeshores.

“Look Alikes”: There are several native honeysuckle species in North America including grape, yellow and red honeysuckle. Some, but not all, native species grow as vines rather than as upright shrubs. Two other exotic honeysuckle’s (Morrow’s and bella) are invasive could also be confused with Tartarian. Morrow’s has white flowers turning yellow and bella has pink flowers turning yellow. All the exotic honeysuckles grow as shrubs and have hollow stems.

The Problem: Birds aid in distribution of seeds by eating ripened fruits and spreading the seeds in their droppings. The vigorous growth of the bush honeysuckles crowds out native shrub and ground layer species. Tartarian honeysuckle’s early spring leaf development is harmful to wildflowers, allowing this invasive to shade out wildflowers which have evolved to bloom before trees have leafed out.

Solutions:

Prevention – Education and citizen awareness can play a huge role in controlling this exotic species. Gardeners and landscapers can slow its spread by eliminating its use in yards and gardens. Plants already in cultivation can be removed and destroyed.

Mechanical – Tartarian honeysuckle roots are fairly shallow and easy to dig out or pull. In sensitive areas soil may be disturbed and enhance further invasions. In these situations, the soil should be tamped down after pulling. In fire-adapted communities spring burning may kill seedlings and top-kill larger plants, but if plants re-sprout additional years would be required. Cutting without follow-up chemical treatment will encourage vigorous re-sprouting and should be avoided.

Chemical – Cut stumps can be treated with Glyphosate. Winter application is most effective on stumps, but spring is 70-80 % effective. Foliar sprays should be done in early spring or late fall when native species are dormant. For all herbicide use, follow label directions for proper dilution rates and precautions. Repeat chemical or physical control for at least three to five years. Prior to use of chemical herbicides, it is important to consult with local natural resource staff to determine which herbicides would be the most effective and would have the least impact on native species. It is also essential to follow safety instructions on the selected product.

**For more information please contact the
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