

# Treeways

2022 - 3

## Buckthorn is Forever

You have contracted with a landscaper or tree company to remove the woody invasive species in your woods. Or you have decided to tackle this buckthorn removal project yourself. No problem. Just cut them down, pull them out, chip or burn the debris and you are done. You can see through your woodland; you've perhaps created a walking trail and now you can see and admire the fantastic mature native trees that you always knew were hidden on your property. So, on the seventh day or seventh week or seventh month you rest and enjoy the wonder of your efforts. Your woodland is beautiful. You are done with buckthorn and can enjoy your improvements forever.

OK, wait five years and see what happens. **Buckthorn is forever.** There are many reasons that buckthorn takes over in our landscapes and woodlands. Buckthorn grows really well in Minnesota. It is a prolific seed producer, and its seeds can germinate as much as five years after dropping to the ground. Birds carry seed from adjacent properties all the time – the seeds are thought to be a laxative for birds. Who knew? Buckthorn thrives following any soil disturbance – dragging brush, pulling weeds, pulling up buckthorn or honeysuckle plants. Buckthorn grows in sun or shade – in shade it grows tall reaching for sun and in sun it becomes a huge bush.

I do not need a crystal ball to see the future five years after removing “all” the buckthorn invaders. With no after care plan for invasive vegetation management your woodland will be a buckthorn woodland once again.

**Following buckthorn removal there must be a period of invasive vegetation management.** Generally, you should follow an yearly buckthorn/invasive species management plan to:

1. Continue to remove/kill seed producing buckthorn trees.
2. Mow or pull buckthorn growing from seed.
3. Plant native understory woody plants or trees.
4. Plant native woodland sedges and wildflowers.
5. Then continue this process each year and you will get the upper hand and will be able to change from the intensive buckthorn management plan to minimal maintenance within a few seasons.
6. You could also hire cute goats to eat the little buckthorn sprouts. An animal permit should be obtained prior to hiring goats to help with buckthorn management.

With this plan you can reinvigorate your woodland with a diversity of native species that will help support our native butterflies, moths, bees, birds, and other cute critters. Your City Forester is available for consultation regarding woody invasive species removal and management recommendations at no charge. He may be reached at 612-803-9033 or [Jim@LStreets.com](mailto:Jim@LStreets.com).