

Burning Bush – *Euonymus alatus* – Winged Euonymus



Burning Bush along West Meetinghouse Road, 2006



Branch detail, Mud Pond Road, 10/26/20

The invasive plant, Burning Bush, is common in yards, road edges, woodlands and fields in our town. It is one of the many plants that turn red in the fall. Some Burning Bushes are already losing their leaves, others are completely red, and others are just starting to turn.

You may see them anywhere in town. Below are a few of the places where they are very noticeable this week:

- Crawford Road. Don't miss the chance to view this
- Hine Road, the lower (eastern) half. Tie for first place viewing.
- Wellsville Avenue, Merryall and West Meetinghouse Roads, especially where Merryall Road and West Meetinghouse Road meet.
- The Railroad Station – Just starting to turn red

Take advantage of the color to learn to recognize the distinctive growth form. Spot them along roadsides, then look for the tell-tale color further into the woods. In a woodland you may see small seedlings just as brilliant as the parent.

Burning Bush branches have heavy ridges called wings, thus the name Winged Euonymus. The size of the ridges varies. The texture of the branches makes it easy to spot Burning Bush in any season.

Burning Bush is an Asian species. It was introduced to the US in the 1860s as a landscape plant. Over time it spread into the wild where it displaces the native plants that provide food and shelter for our native insects and other animals. The primary spread is from seeds carried by birds.

Burning Bush was officially listed as invasive in our state when the invasive plant laws went into effect in 2003. Due to its importance in the landscape industry, it was not banned. However, many nurseries and landscapers no longer plant it.

Researchers at the University of Connecticut are working on developing sterile cultivars of Burning Bush. In addition, they are studying, developing cultivars and otherwise promoting alternative native species for landscape plantings.

For more information, see

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1081645.pdf

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