

Buckthorn identification

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*)

Appearance: Tall understory shrub or small tree up to 25' high with a spreading loosely branched crown, often multiple stems at the base. Female and male plants.



Leaves: Egg-shaped, pointed at the tip, smooth, dark, glossy and finely-toothed. 3-5 pair of curved leaf veins. Leaves stay green late into fall.



Branch: Buds and leaves are opposite. Twigs often end in sharp, stout thorns.



Wood: Brown bark with elongate silvery corky projections (caution: native plums or cherries have a similar bark). Cut branch exposes yellow sapwood and orange heartwood.



Fruit: Large, round, berry-like clusters of black 1/4" fruit. Ripens in August and September.

Glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*)

Appearance: Tall understory shrub or small tree, grows up to 18' high, has a spreading loosely branched crown, often multiple stems at the base.



Leaves:
Oval, smooth, dark, glossy, and toothless edges. 8-9 pair of leaf veins. Leaves stay green late into fall.



MARK MULLER

Branch:
Buds and leaves are alternate. No thorn at tip of twig.



Wood: Brown bark with elongate silvery corky projections (caution: native plums or cherries have a similar bark). Cut branch exposes yellow sapwood and orange heartwood.



MARK MULLER

Fruit: Small clusters of berry-like, 1/4" fruit. Ripens progressively from a distinctive red-brown to a dark purple in August and September.

**CHEMICALS FOR THE HOMEOWNER THAT CAN BE
PURCHASED AT MENARDS, FLEET FARM, HOME DEPOT AND
OTHER HOME IMPROVEMENT STORES**

FOR VEGETATION: Round Up, Round Up Pro Rodeo, Trimec and brand names that state vegetation killer.

The brand names are Gordons, Ortho and Monsanto.

Vegetation products will NOT work on woody brush or stumps.

**FOR BRUSH AND
WOODY PLANTS:**

There are 3 major brand names – Gordons, Ortho and Monsanto.

The product would be labeled with the brand name and its use, such as Gordons Brush Killer or Ortho Brush Killer, Ortho Weed B Gone.

TIPS FOR WEED WRENCH USERS



Basic operation is simple, but here are a few cautions and tips it will help to know. First, the safety rules:

WATCH OUT BEHIND YOU. Always be prepared for the plant you are pulling to break loose suddenly when the roots break free, a branch breaks off, or a bad jaw placement slips off. Brace yourself to avoid falling backwards, or be sure that if you do fall, it isn't over a bank or onto a sharp object.

WATCH OUT AROUND YOU. When working with or carrying a Weed Wrench, be careful of people nearby. It's safest to carry it with the head behind you and the long lever arm in front where you can see its swing.

WATCH OUT FOR YOUR EYES. Always be cautious when pulling plants that have thorns or stiff branches at eye-level; wear eye protection if necessary.

WATCH OUT FOR YOUR FINGERS. The jaws have tremendous gripping force. Keep your fingers out of them, and away from anyplace else on the head where pinching or scissoring actions are occurring.

Now that we've scared you with all the ways you could hurt yourself operating a Weed Wrench, in practice everybody seems to know instinctively to avoid these things and nobody's getting hurt. In fact Weed Wrench is the safest of all alternative methods (blades or chemicals).

Now for the operating tips:

PLACING THE JAW: Open the jaw until the jaw-catch engages. Place the jaws around the stem and disengage the jaw-catch by putting your foot on top of the lifter arm behind the jaw and giving the grip handle a tug. If the jaw shows any tendency to slip upward instead of gripping the stem, keep pressure with your foot on the lifter arm until the jaw is solidly clamped on.

If the plant is one that spreads at ground level and has branches interfering with good placement of the jaw, you can grab the interfering branch with the Weed Wrench and rip it off to gain access to the stronger stem. Or, you can use a pair of loppers or a pruning saw to get the offending part out of the way. When working with a plant that has needles or thorns it may be desirable to saw it off a few inches above ground before pulling the root; then you don't have the top stabbing you while you work the Weed Wrench.

EXTRACTING THE PLANT: Once the jaw is clamped on, give a reasonably hard pull to determine whether it's going to be an easy or hard root to extract. If it's easy, just keep pulling. If it's hard, don't try to pull it in one heroic stroke but begin "pumping" the handle instead, rhythmically pulling hard, then relaxing the pull. This will usually fracture the soil a little more with each pump, the ground will begin to heave, and finally you will hear a muffled "pop" deep underground when the tap root breaks. *This technique is the most important thing you can learn for defeating stubborn plants.* In a worst case, dig around the plant with a series of pick or mattock strokes to break the surface soil and some of the lateral roots, then try pumping the handle again. (In practice, you rarely need to resort to this last method.) The pumping technique is also useful to gently coax a root out of the soil when a weak stem would otherwise break before the root pulls free.

**CITY OF PRIOR LAKE
WEED WRENCH RENTAL AGREEMENT AND LIABILITY WAIVER**

Rental Terms

Item: 1 weed wrench for pulling buckthorn-Size: sm___ med___ Lg___

Rental Period (not more than 6 days): _____, 20__ to _____, 20__

Damage Deposit: \$200. The Damage Deposit will be applied to the cost of repairing any damage beyond ordinary wear and tear or replacing the weed wrench if not returned.

The weed wrench must be returned clean and in the same condition in which it was received, except for ordinary wear and tear.

City of Prior Lake
Community Development - Natural Resources Division
4646 Dakota Street SE
Prior Lake, MN 55372
Telephone: (952) 447-9810 or 447-9813

Liability Waiver

I agree to hold the City harmless and to indemnify and defend the City and its elected officials, officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, demands, actions, causes of action, losses, or damages of whatever nature or character, including but not limited to personal injury or property damage, arising from, allegedly arising from or related to the use of the weed wrench during the rental period, including attorneys' fees and expenses.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Name (please print): _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: (_____) _____

\$200 deposit paid by cash or check # _____

Weed wrench # _____