

## **W. Russian Olive** (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

### **Key Characteristics:**

Russian olive is a member of the Oleaster family. A hardy, fast-growing tree introduced from Europe, Russian olive has been promoted for windrow and ornamental plantings. Russian olive can be found in both dry and moist soils, but does particularly well in sandy flood plains. This tree may reach heights of 10 to 25 feet. The **trunk and branches** are armed with 1 to 2 inch woody thorns. **Leaves** are covered with small scales which give the foliage a **distinctive silvery** appearance. **Flowers** are yellowish-green in color and produce a berry-like **fruit** that silvery when first formed but turns brown at maturity. Russian Olive is rapidly replacing native riparian species and eliminating valuable nesting sites for birds. It should be eliminated whenever possible.

### **Locations:**

To date Russian olive has not been a problem in Pitkin County but has the capability to spread if left unchecked. This weed is starting to establish itself along the Crystal River, Roaring Fork, and Snowmass Creek valleys. Mapping and monitoring efforts have begun in 2009 and will help determine whether infestations are spreading.

### **Biological control:**

No known biological controls at this time.

### **Cultural control:**

Do not plant or propagate Russian Olive. Landscape with native trees wherever possible. Plant and support native vegetation in riparian areas.

### **Mechanical control:**

Russian Olive saplings and sprouts can be hand-pulled or removed with a shovel or other appropriate hand-tool. Do this when the soil is moist to insure removal of the root system. For larger trees, cutting alone (i.e. without herbicide treatment) will actually promote denser re-growth. Burning during the dormant season also results in vigorous re-sprouting.

### **Chemical control:**

Contact Pitkin County Land Management Department for more specific information about herbicide products, application rates, and equipment calibration.

