



HAVE YOU SEEN THIS PLANT?

It is an Emergent Invasive in Orange County



Italian buckthorn is native to lands around the Mediterranean Sea. It is a large, dense, evergreen woody shrub, growing upright to 16 feet high and nearly as wide. In Southern California, it is often used in landscaping as a screen or foundation plant.

ITALIAN BUCKTHORN *Rhamnus alaternus*

Known OC Sites & Status Updates

Distribution map & info:

- calflora.org/cgi-bin/species_query.cgi?where-calrecnum=9447
- cal-ipc.org/plants/risk/rhamnus-alaternus-risk/



Rhamnus spp. are often dioecious: some individual plants have flowers that are functionally male only, others have flowers that are functionally female only. Italian Buckthorns in the landscape trade are supposedly all male clones, hence are not supposed to make fruits. But both male and female plants have been found in Upper Newport Bay, currently its only known site in Orange County's wildlands. That means that some plants used in local landscaping have both male and female flowers, hence have made fruits. The small quarter-inch fruit is reddish, ripening to dark purple, containing 2 to 4 seeds. The fruit is eaten by birds, who spread the seed in their droppings—including in any nearby wildlands, such as Upper Newport Bay. It is considered a noxious weed in some parts of Australia and other Mediterranean-climate areas of the world.



The stems have reddish bark and pubescent young branches, rounded and compact foliage with alternating leaves, 0.75 to 2.5 in. long, sometimes nearly opposite, oval or lanceolate, leathery, shiny green, yellowish-green underneath, perhaps with small serrations on the margins.



The small fragrant flowers are gathered in a short axillary yellow-green raceme. The flowering period extends from February to April.

The plant can cause dermatitis in those sensitive to poison oak.

ITALIAN BUCKTHORN, P. 2

IF YOU SEE THIS PLANT AT A SITE THAT'S NOT ON THE LIST:

- Record the plant's location as exactly as you can (GPS coordinates if possible), the date you saw it, and an estimate of how many there were. Include the site's landowner or manager, if known.
- Take identifying photos: the whole plant & its surroundings, closeups of leaves, flowers & fruits/pods.
- If you take a sample, place it immediately into a sealed bag.
- To avoid spreading the plant, check your clothing and shoes thoroughly before leaving the area, and remove and bag all traces of seeds.
- Report the find immediately to invasives@occnps.org.