

Russian Olive; Oleaster

Elaeagnus angustifolia L.

Taxonomic Classification

Domain: *Eukaryotes*

Kingdom: *Plantae*

Phylum/Division:

Anthophyta

Class: *Dicotyledoneae*

Order: *Proteales*

Family: *Elaeagnaceae*

Genus: *Elaeagnus*

Species: *Angustifolia*



[2] Fruits



[3] Flowers & leaves



[4] thorns

Botanical Description

Trees small to medium size, 16 to 40 ft tall. Stems reddish brown, smooth and shiny when young; bearing sharp thorns. Leaves alternate, simple, lanceolate to elliptic (longer than wide); margins entire (smooth edges), peltate scales covering leaf blades, more underneath than above, causing bi-colored silvery white leaves. Flowers fragrant, 8-12 mm long, petals 4, yellow and silver-hairy, blooming May to July. Fruit a drupe up to 2 cm long, silvery green with hairs, older fruits lose pubescence, becoming smooth and brown.

Identification Tips

Some key attributes of the Russian Olive are the silvery, bi-colored leaves, light green fruits and sharp, stout thorns. There are other species in the Oleaster family, but none have leaves as long and thin, hence the name *angustifolia*.

Fun Fact!

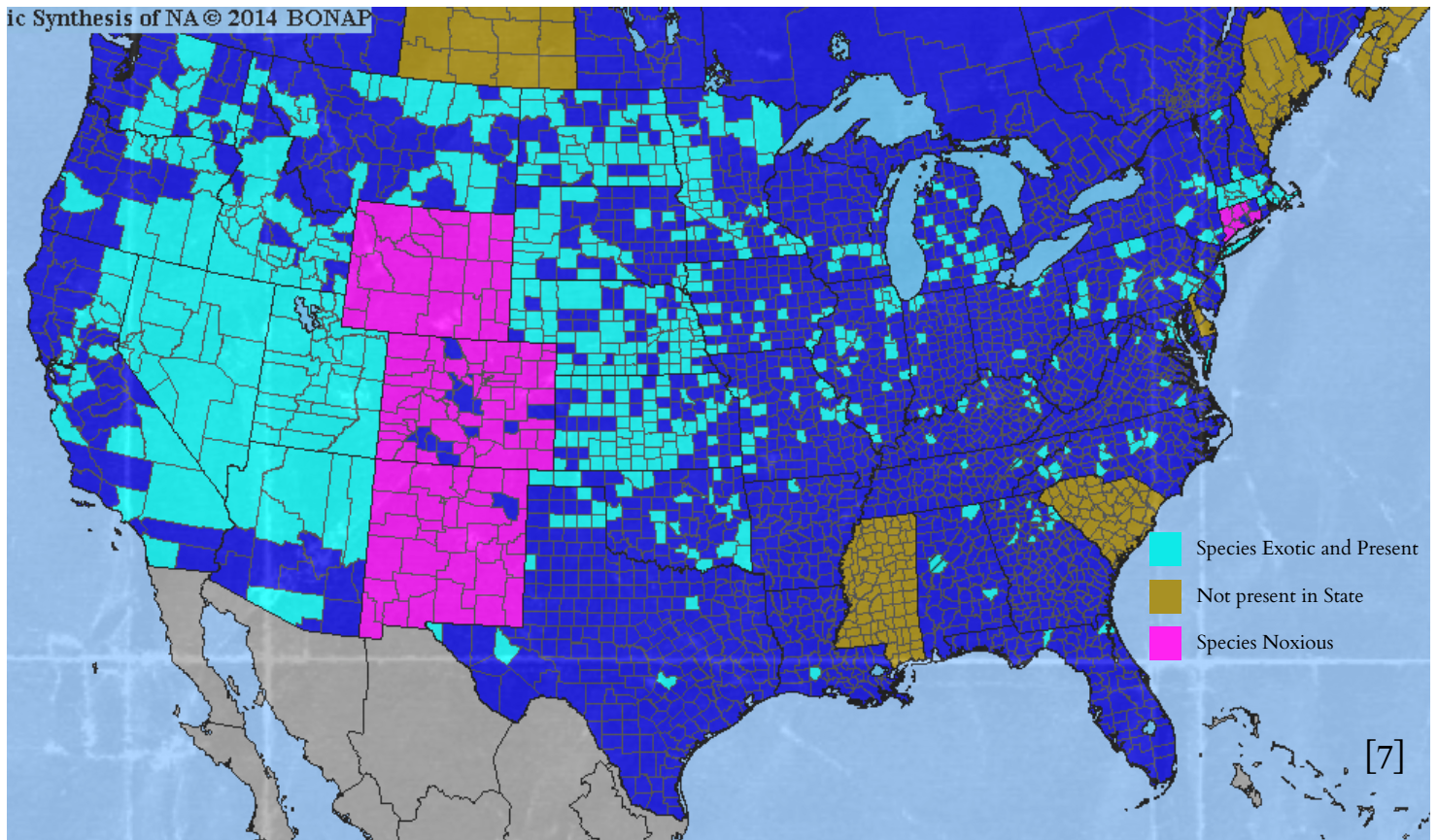
angustifolia means “narrow leaves”.

[5]

Ethnobotanical and Other Uses

An extract of the leaves is used in Iranian traditional medicine to assist with wounds, it promotes and stimulates healing. The fruits have also been utilized for gastrointestinal issues, muscle relaxers, and a source of antioxidants. More medicinal research is currently underway and in development for treatment of Alzheimers disease, and potential cancer treatments [6].

Habitat Range



Conservation Status

Species exotic and present, not globally rated.

[1]

Plant Ecology

Russian Olive is native to Eurasia, it was introduced and cultivated for shade, but is invasive and became widespread and established in North America. Trees threaten native species along drainages where it has become naturalized in moist wet lowlands due to its rapid growth, resistance to extreme conditions, and longer lifespan.

[8]

References:

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- [8] Welsh et al. (1993). *Elaeagnaceae* A. L. Juss. In *A Utah flora* (Second Edition. Revised, p. 332). essay, Brigham Young University.

Information collated by Anne Robinson under the direction of Dr. Ashley N. Egan in collaboration with UVU's summer 2023 BOT 2050 and fall 2023 BOT 4300 classes and through the UVU Excelerate Program.

