

THE ENEMY: Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia* L.)

Strategy: This fast growing tree of moderate size, reaches a height of 10-25 feet. The branches are covered with 1 to 2 inch woody thorns. Leaves are narrow and 2 to 3 inches long with a silvery-green appearance. The plant puts off a very distinct odor which makes it a desirable ornamental tree. Flowers are yellow, and arranged in clusters. The tree was originally introduced for wind-breaks for reduction of soil wind erosion and makes great food and nesting for birds.

Attack: Russian olive has a unique seed in that it must pass through the stomach of an animal to remove the outer shell. Once the outer shell is removed it can germinate. This is why you see the tree growing in the middle of nowhere. Its thorns make it habitat for undesirable birds such as Magpies as well as keeping animals from grazing upon it. Once established the plant spreads by seeds and can choke out other desirable trees and shrubs by utilizing the nutrients and moisture. Furthermore it causes havoc to the ditch banks with its roots and makes maintenance very difficult.

Defense: Chainsaws are very effective to control the plant and like Salt cedar, applying a herbicide on the freshly cut stump surface (within minutes) will make sure that the tree doesn't grow back. Basal applications of some herbicides also work, but this method does not remove the thorns tree from harming clothing and skin. Products such as Garlon, Crossbow, and Habitat are widely used during the anytime of the year. We have a new tool of which implants a .22 rimfire shell with herbicide inside of it. When the tree starts growing in spring it absorbs the herbicide. Winter is an excellent time to control these unwanted trees.