



TACKLING

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*)

Invasive species have significant impacts on the environment, human health, infrastructure and the economy in the Metro Vancouver region.

Originally from Asia, butterfly bush has been introduced worldwide as an ornamental shrub valued for its attractive and fragrant flowers. It produces abundant tiny, winged seeds that can travel long distances, and cuttings can re-sprout easily. Butterfly bush has no natural predators in our region, and it often invades disturbed and natural areas. Unfortunately, many garden centres still sell this plant.

IMPACTS

On BC's southwest coast, butterfly bush can form dense thickets, displace native plants, and inhibit tree growth. Although adult butterflies drink the nectar from butterfly bush flowers, the plant does not provide habitat or food for butterfly eggs and larvae. Native flowering shrubs are the best host plants for all the life stages of native butterflies.

IDENTIFICATION

- **Lifecycle:** Perennial, deciduous shrub with arching branches, 1-5 metres tall
- **Stems:** Young stems are green; mature stems are thick and woody with peeling grey-brown bark
- **Leaves:** Opposite, narrow leaves with toothed edges, up to 25 centimetres long, hairy on the underside
- **Flowers:** Dense, cone-shaped flower heads grow at the ends of branches; flowers are tube-shaped, white to pink or purple, with an orange centre
- **Seeds:** Two-sided tube-shaped capsules with many tiny seeds with wings
- **Roots:** Fibrous roots



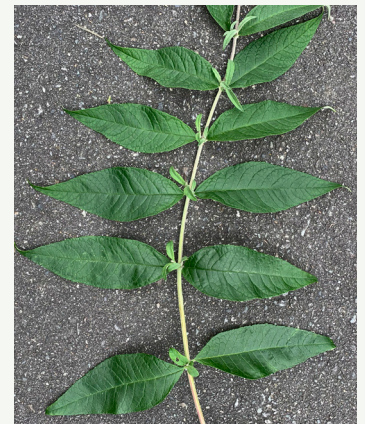
Flowerhead

CREDIT: ISCMV



Mature, woody stems

CREDIT: ISCMV



Leaves

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CONTROL METHODS

To prevent further spread across the region and beyond, it is best not to purchase, trade, or grow butterfly bush, as even cultivars advertised as sterile can still produce seeds. Effective invasive plant management typically involves a variety of control methods. The following table summarizes the recommended techniques for controlling butterfly bush on private property or where permission has been granted by the land owner or manager. Other methods may be used by professionals.

CONTROL STRATEGY	TECHNIQUES	SUITABLE SITES	NOTES
Manual	Pulling or digging	When the soil is loose or wet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To avoid spreading seeds, undertake control activities in June to July, before seeds have matured• It may be necessary to cut the stems to provide access to the trunk and roots• Remove as many of the roots as possible• Stems, branches, and roots can re-sprout after cutting so they should not be composted

Butterfly bush seeds may be viable in the soil for up to 5 years. Planting native plants or a native groundcover can discourage butterfly bush regrowth.

How Can You Help?

- Do not purchase, trade or grow butterfly bush or cultivars or varieties. Check seed mixtures carefully.
- Control invasive plants and replace them with a non-invasive alternative. Check out growgreenguide.ca for suggestions.
- Do not place invasive plants in your backyard composter as the temperature will not become hot enough to destroy the seeds, stems and roots.
- To reduce the spread of invasive species, dispose of yard waste and infested soil appropriately. Visit your municipality's website for more information.
- Download the '**Report Invasives BC**' app to identify and report invasive species.
- Join a stewardship group and help remove invasive species from local parks.

For the complete set of best management practices for giant hogweed, and other key invasive species, visit MetroVancouver.org and search 'Invasive Species'.

