

# Have you seen this invasive plant?

**Butterfly bush** is an escaped ornamental shrub that aggressively forms dense thickets along river and stream banks.

***Learn more at [www.nwcb.wa.gov](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov)***

This deciduous shrub has arching branches that grow up to 15 feet tall. Leaves are opposite on the stems, lance or egg-shaped and up to 10 inches long. Top sides of leaves are green to blue-gray, while undersides are whitish with hairs.



Tim Miller, WSU Extension

Flowers form capsules that contain many small, winged seeds that are spread by the wind. Plants can produce thousands of seeds each year that can readily sprout and form a dense covering of seedlings.



King County NWCB



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Flower spikes are upright or nodding and 4-10 inches long. Each fragrant flower has 4 petals and is commonly a shade of purple or white with an orange center. There are many different hybrids and cultivars of butterfly bush so flower color can vary.



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## Why is butterfly bush (*Buddleja davidii*) a noxious weed?

- This species outcompetes native plant species by forming dense thickets in open, disturbed areas, especially along riverbanks and gravel bars.
- Butterfly bush is a prolific seed producer, able to begin seed production during its first year.
- It does not provide a food source for butterfly larvae, a critical phase of a butterfly's lifecycle.

## Where do you find butterfly bush?

- Still available from many plant nurseries and catalogs, butterfly bush is often planted as an ornamental shrub in yards.
- Its dust-like seed can be carried long distances by the wind to colonize areas far away from ornamental plantings.

## What can you do?

- Plant non-invasive species, including different species of *Buddleja*. Seeds of *Buddleja davidii* hybrids and cultivars are being tested for viability, check to see which ones are okay to plant.
- If you have this species, prevent plants from going to seed by cutting back flowerheads after they have bloomed. Bag and trash any flowers developing seeds; do not compost.
- Report sightings of escaped plants to your county noxious weed control board or to [noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov](mailto:noxiousweeds@agr.wa.gov).



Washington State  
**Noxious Weed  
Control Board**

