



## Michigan Invasive Plant Council

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### Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System (MPIAS June 2008)

#### **Lonicera x bella, Bell's honeysuckle**

**Summary and Recommendations for Michigan:** Initial reports of Bell's honeysuckle in North America are dated around the late 1800s-early 1900s. It is a cross between *L. morrowii* and *L. tatarica*. Throughout many areas of North America, Bell's honeysuckle is considered invasive and a threat to native habitats and plant communities. They can escape, establish, and persist outside cultivation, and may continue to spread into adjacent areas. Bell's honeysuckle produces annual seed crops and reproduces almost entirely by seed. Seeds are readily dispersed by birds and small mammals. Although primarily a plant on disturbed sites, *Lonicera x bella* has tremendous tolerance for temperature, soil moisture, soil type, and light. It is most often found on forest edges and interiors and in a variety of waste places such as abandoned agricultural land and road and railroad rights-of-way. It forms a dense layer that shades the ground, interfering with growth of many native woody and herbaceous species. The ground under a Bell's honeysuckle thicket is often void of other vegetation.

**Invasiveness in Michigan:** *Lonicera x bella*, Bell's Honeysuckle's potential invasiveness is considered high due to its seed reproduction and dispersal. Its invasiveness rank is considered high across natural and managed systems with the exception in Ag/Hort/Turf production systems. Regional importance varies between medium in the Upper and Northern Lower Peninsula ecological regions to high in the Southern Lower Peninsula. For more information consult the complete MPIAS assessment.

**Value in Michigan:** Recognized value is found in managed landscape systems, erosion control and wildlife habitat.

**Responsible Use:** As recently as the 1980's Bell's honeysuckle was promoted for its wildlife value, ornamental use, and soil stabilization. *Lonicera x bella* is not recommended for use. Most future invasions will originate from naturalized populations of the shrubs.

**Early detection/rapid response:** Bell's honeysuckle is identified by its leaf characteristics, flowers and fruit. Consult printed or on-line resources for pictorial descriptors of the plant.

**Long term control/management:** Grubbing or pulling seedlings and mature shrubs, repeated clipping of shrubs may eliminate existing plants and is effective in temporarily reducing seed production. Seedlings are easily pulled, especially when soils are moist. Application of herbicide to cut stumps can provide effective control while minimizing risk of damage to associated species. Herbicide should be applied immediately after cutting, for best results. Some recommendations suggest 2 cuts/applications per year, 1 in early spring followed by another in early autumn. Spraying herbicide on foliage may also be effective. While some sources indicate spraying just after

flowering is most effective, early spring application has also been effective. Chemical applications should be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's label.

**Restoration:** Removal of *Lonicera x bella* requires restoration to prevent or minimize invasion by other undesirable species. In such case, a competent restoration ecologist should be consulted for appropriate species and planting procedures.

For complete information from the Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System  
Consult: <http://invasiveplantsmi.org>