Russian-olive
**Russian-olive**  
*Elaeagnus angustifolia*

### General Description
Small tree, sometimes referred to as a large shrub, introduced from Russia. Tolerates saline/alkaline soils. May invade unmanaged bottomlands and moist pastures. Thorny. Silvery leaf color. Leaves retained very late into fall. The largest tree in North Dakota is 43 feet tall with a canopy spread of 63 feet.

### Leaves and Buds
**Bud Arrangement** - Alternate.
**Bud Color** - Gray-brown, rounded, oblong, with 4 silvery scales.
**Bud Size** - 1/8 inch.
**Leaf Type and Shape** - Simple, oblong-lanceolate to linear.
**Leaf Margins** - Entire.
**Leaf Surface** - Scaly.
**Leaf Length** - 1 to 3 inches.
**Leaf Width** - 1/4 to 5/8 inch.
**Leaf Color** - Upper surface scaly, grayish-green; undersurface silvery-scaled.

### Flowers and Fruits
**Flower Type** - Flowers are perfect.
**Flower Color** - Silvery or whitish outside, yellow inside, fragrant.
**Fruit Type** - Fruits are drupe-like, 1/4 inch long and pulpy.
**Fruit Color** - Yellow inside, coated with silvery scales.

### Form
**Growth Habit** - Branches random and spreading, starting at base of the trunk, forming a somewhat rounded tree.
**Texture** - Medium-fine, summer; medium-coarse, winter.
**Crown Height** - 15 to 25 feet.
**Crown Width** - 12 to 25 feet.
**Bark Color** - Young branches silvery, older branches a glistening bronzy-brown, pith is brown.
**Root System** - Fibrous root system.

### Environmental Requirements

#### Soils
Soil Texture - Adapted to a wide variety of soils.  
**Soil pH** - 5.5 to 8.0. Tolerates alkaline and saline soils.
**Windbreak Suitability Group** - 1, 1K, 2, 2K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G, 8, 9C, 9W, 9L.

#### Cold Hardiness
**USDA Zone** 2.

#### Water
**Drought resistant.** Does not withstand ponding.

#### Light
**Full sun.**

### Uses

#### Conservation/Windbreaks
Small tree for farmstead and field windbreaks. Seed is spread prolifically by birds and may overrun unmanaged areas, especially saline sites.

#### Wildlife
Excellent for wildlife, over 50 species use it for food and cover.

#### Agroforestry Products
Wood - Beautiful wood for small woodwork pieces.

#### Urban/Recreational
Can be used as specimen plant for its color accent, or as an impenetrable border or screen.

### Cultivated Varieties
Red King Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia ‘Red King’*) - Rusty-red fruits. Not sufficiently winter hardy in North Dakota.

### Related Species
Sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)
Silverberry (*Elaeagnus commutata*)
Silver Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*)

### Pests
Often infected by branch and stem cankers (Tubercularia canker).