

Glossy Buckthorn

Regno: flora

Riparian and marsh woods

 [frangula.jpg](#) [1]

Glossy Buckthorn or Alder Buckthorn - *Frangula alnus*

Deciduous shrub up to 1.5 to 3 metres tall, occasionally growing to a tree reaching 7 metres in height. The reddish-brown trunk is extremely rich in lenticels.

The alternate leaves are oval or elliptical in shape with undivided margins (this last characteristic distinguishes the tree at first sight from the European Alder whose leaves are toothed).

The flowers, which emerge at the same time as the leaves, are hermaphrodite and consist of 5 white petals. The fruits are spherical (max. 1 cm in diameter) ranging from green- red in colour and changing to black-violet when they are ripe.

The Glossy Blackthorn is a typical species of hygrophilous woodland and can be found, often associated with Alders or Birch, from sea level to 1,500 metres altitude.

The fruits are not edible for man, as they contain purgative substances which can provoke vomiting, but birds freely feed on them and so help seed dispersal.

In popular medicine, the bark was gathered for use in infusions or decoctions as a laxative. In the past the charcoal of this tree was much sought after as a substance for making gun powder and manufacturing fuses.

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[1] <http://zoneumidetoscane.it/sites/default/files/frangula.jpg>