

Russian olive tree removal protects open space

While Russian olive trees were originally introduced to North America as ornamental trees, their adaptability and invasive nature have landed them on the Colorado Noxious Weeds List. The Metro District's Russian Olive Tree Removal Program helps protect our open space from these aggressive trees.

Russian olives are detrimental to local ecosystems because they out-compete native species and threaten our waterways. Each tree can absorb as much as 150 gallons of water per day.



In 2020, the Metro District plans to remove Russian olives from the Plum Valley and Spring Gulch open spaces on the west side of Highlands Ranch. As funding is secured in the future, additional portions of open space will be addressed.

After an area has been cleared of Russian olive trees, there may be a need for revegetation with native plants depending on site conditions and opportunities. Reintroducing native species where possible in these areas can help prevent erosion and lessen the chance of future establishment of Russian olive.

How can you help?

- Educate your friends, family and colleagues. Sharing information about Russian olives helps raise awareness and protect our open space.
- Landscape responsibly and consider replacing Russian olives in your yard with native species. Many older properties in Highlands Ranch have Russian olive trees planted for wind breaks and privacy hedges. The removal of these trees will greatly decrease the future reintroduction of this invasive tree. One adult Russian olive tree produces thousands of seeds per year, so the properties adjacent to the open space are a major factor contributing to this invasive species being reintroduced.

For questions, please contact Natural Resources Manager Nick Adamson at nadamson@highlandsranch.org or 720-240-5917.