

## *Alnus glutinosa*, Black Alder

This plant is a tree in the birch family, native to Europe, temperate Asia, and north Africa. Black Alder can grow up to 50 feet tall, having a crown which spreads 20-40 feet wide. It can grow on a wide range of soils, but prefers moist conditions. It is commonly seen in riparian zones, wetlands, along ponds/lakes, forest wetlands, and sometimes urban areas. Invasions of this tree can disrupt the ecosystem, preventing vegetation growth in the understory. It is usually spread through water movement, and has used the rivers in the area to invade New York.

**Description:** Black Alder has a smooth grayish-green bark that can turn brown over time. The leaves on this tree are alternate, oval shaped and doubly-toothed, often appearing serrated along the edges. The upper-side of the leaf is dark green, while the under-side is paler. Leaves often have a notch at the very tip.

**Control:** Small infestations can be removed manually by pulling, while larger populations can be treated with systemic herbicides. Basal bark treatments or applications of herbicides on cut stumps can be effective. Control of mature trees should be done before fruits start to drop in late September.

**Look-alikes:** The Speckled Alder (*Alnus incana*) resembles Black Alder, as it also has catkins that show in the spring. Green Alder (*Alnus viridis* spp *crispa*) also looks similar, but does not inhabit the same range as Black Alder.

**Flower Time and Description:** This tree flowers in early spring, with catkins remaining on the tree through the fall. Catkins are made up of small individual flowers that clump together which form cone-like fruits in fall.

