

### *Hippophae rhamnoides*

[Synonyms : *Elaeagnus rhamnoides*, *Hippophae angustifolia*, *Hippophae littoralis*, *Hippophae rhamnoides*, *Hippophae sibirica*, *Hippophae stourdiana*, *Osyris rhamnoides*, *Rhamnoides hippophae*]

**SEA-BUCKTHORN** is a thorny deciduous shrub (rarely a tree). Native to Europe (including Britain), through Asia to northern China, it has tiny green flowers.

It is also known as *Argousier* (French), Common sea buckthorn, *Dhurchuk* (Hindi), *Duindoorn* (Dutch), *Havtorn* (Swedish), *Hipofeo ramnoida* (Esperanto), *Milech* (Punjabi), *Mŷr-rhafnwydd* (Welsh), *Rakytník řešetlákový* (Czech), *Rakytník rešetliakovitý* (Slovak), *Rakytník úzkolistý* (Czech), Sallow thorn, *Sanddorn* (German), Seaberry, *Tyrni* (Finnish), and Willow thorn.

The flowers are pollinated by wind.

The fruit juice has high Vitamin C content.

Warning – large quantities of fruit taken internally can cause purging.

*Rhamnoides* is made up of the genus name *Rhamnus* and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning ‘buckthorn-like’.

In Europe, France particularly, the fruit are often used to make a meat or fish sauce, and in Siberia and central Asia they are eaten with milk and cheese.

There are parts of Europe, especially in France (despite the fact that she is known for making them into a savoury sauce) and Switzerland, where the berries are considered by some to be poisonous. In this context it is said that one of Rousseau’s admirers saw the great man eating them and, despite believing that the fruit was poisonous, refrained from warning Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) out of misguided awe and respect. It seems however that the French primitive painter must have survived the experience.

The small brownish-orange berries are avoided by most birds, except pheasant, unless there is shortage of food. They will then perch on the stems impervious to the vicious thorns and strip the bushes bare.

Leaves, stems and root are said to yield a yellow dye the quality of which is uncertain.

The fairly heavy wood has been used to make charcoal and has also been burnt as fuel.

Sea-buckthorn can play its part environmentally as in some places it has been planted so that its roots will bind the sand.

Today fruit juice provides a commercial ingredient for the cosmetics industry which is used in face creams and by the toiletry industry too in toothpaste. This moderately hard wood is used for turning.

Medicinally, the plant has been used in Asia to treat lung ailments.