

Silver Buffaloberry



Silver Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*)

General Description

A tall, thorny, thicket-forming native shrub. Well adapted to dry, moderately alkaline and saline soils. Tolerates infertile soils, in part because of its ability to fix and assimilate atmospheric nitrogen. Berries used for jellies.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Opposite.

Bud Color - Silvery.

Bud Size - Small, solitary or multiple, stalked, oblong.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, oblong-elliptical.

Leaf Margins - Entire.

Leaf Surface - Finely-scaled, pubescent.

Leaf Length - 1 to 2 inches.

Leaf Width - 1/4 to 5/8 inch.

Leaf Color - Silvery-gray on both surfaces.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Dioecious.

Flower Color - Yellowish.

Fruit Type - Drupe-like, insipid, ovoid.

Fruit Color - Predominately red, however, some female plants can produce yellow fruits.

Form

Growth Habit - Loosely branched shrub of rounded outline.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; fine, winter.

Crown Height - 6 to 14 feet.

Crown Width - 8 to 14 feet.

Bark Color - Brown.

Root System - Spreading.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Grows well in most soils.

Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0. Adapted to moderately alkaline and saline soils.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G, 8, 9C, 9L.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone - 2.

Water

Drought tolerant. Not adapted to wet, poorly-drained sites.

Light

Full sun.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Medium to tall shrub for farmstead and field windbreaks, riparian plantings, and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Highly important for mule deer browse. Ideal cover and nesting site for many birds. Preferred food source of many songbirds and sharptail grouse. Good late winter food source for birds.

Agroforestry Products

Food - Fruit processed as jams and jellies.

Urban/Recreational

Ornamental foliage and fruit, but limited in use because of thorns and suckering habit.

Cultivated Varieties

Sakakawea Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea* 'Sakakawea')

- Released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Related Species

Russet Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*)

Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

Sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)

Silverberry (*E. commutata*)

Pests

Common diseases include stem decay and branch canker. Deer commonly browse the twigs and leaves. Stems are sometimes broken by snow.

SILVER BUFFALOBERRY

Shepherdia argentea (Pursh)
Nutt.
Plant Symbol = SHAR

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials
Program



USDA NRCS National Plant Materials Center
Beltsville, MD

Alternate Names

Elaeagnus utilis A. Nels., *Lepargyrea argentea*
(Pursh) Greene

Uses

Windbreaks: Plant silver buffaloberry in the outer rows of multi-row plantings when supplemental moisture is available. This species has potential for single-row plantings where a low, dense barrier is desired.

Wildlife: The thorny thickets formed by the shrub create ideal cover for numerous bird and animal species. It is preferred nesting site for many songbirds. Some birds eat the fruit although it is not relished by a wide variety of species.

Recreation and Beautification: The thorns and suckering habit of this species must be taken into consideration when planning its use in recreation areas. The fruit is highly prized for making jelly.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Shepherdia argentea (Pursh) Nutt., silver buffaloberry, is a deciduous, thorny shrub or small tree of 6 to 20 feet in height native to North America. It occurs as scattered to frequent plants along streams, in bottomlands, and on moist hillsides throughout western Wyoming and Colorado at elevations to 7,500 feet. The shrub is winter hardy and alkaline tolerant, but has only limited drought and shade tolerance. Under favorable conditions, it readily forms thorny thickets.

Fruits are reddish, globe-shaped "berries" (drupes) about 1/8 to 1/4 inch across; flowers are brownish-yellow, small, with male and female flowers borne on separate plants in clusters of 1 to 3 at the leaf axils; leaves are opposite, silvery-scurfy, oblong and entire, up to 2 inches long; stems are thorny, silvery-scurfy when young, brownish in age; roots are shallow and much branched, readily sprouting.

Adaptation and Distribution

This species is adapted to elevations below 7,500 feet and 15 to 20 inches of precipitation equivalent; it requires supplemental moisture in low precipitation zones.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment

Prepare a weed free site for planting.

Management

Planted areas should be kept free of weeds during the first 2 years of establishment. Care should be taken to prevent suckers from taking root in unwanted areas around homes and agricultural systems. Over-sprouting can be controlled mechanically or through the use of approved herbicides.

Pests and Potential Problems

This species may be subject to a heart rot disease which can cause serious problems. There are no known serious insect problems.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Seedlings of silver buffaloberry are available from most hardwood commercial nurseries. 'Sakakawea' (Canada) was developed by the Bismarck, ND Plant Materials Center and released in 1984.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:

USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

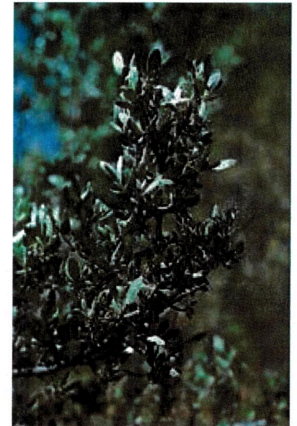
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Buffaloberry

Shepherdia argentea



Growth Form: round to irregular

Crown Density: dense

Size: 10 feet high; spreading

Drought Resistance: good

Cold Hardiness: excellent

Growth Rate: moderate

Life Span: long

Elevational Range: to 7,500 feet

Soil Conditions: tolerates alkaline

Possible Insect Problems: unimportant

Possible Disease Problems: unimportant

Wildlife Value: good: food value; excellent: cover for small game and songbird nesting

Seasonal Color: not conspicuous

Miscellany: native; edible fruit for jellies; forms thickets

Taken from: Trees for Conservation, a buyer's guide, Colorado State Forest Service