Plant Data Sheet

Species (common name, Latin name)

Asarum caudatum – 'wild ginger'

Range

North from British Columbia to central California, Found less frequently east of the Cascades in Washington, and sometimes in northern Idaho and western Montana

Climate, elevation

Found in low- to mid-elevations, below 1500m; prefers part to full shade in the understory of moist coniferous forests, and likes soils high in organic matter.

Local occurrence (where, how common)

Found most frequently along the Pacific Coast, east to the Cascades.

Habitat preferences

Shady sites in coniferous forests, highly organic soils

Plant strategy type/successional stage

Understory species, indicator or dominant in forest community and habitat types.

Associated species

Tsuga heterophylla, Pinus monticola, Abies grandis, Pseudotsuga menzeisii, Thuja plicata, Adenocaulon bicolor, Clintonia uniflora, Coptis occidentalis.

May be collected as: (seed, layered, divisions, etc.)

Seed (though this is difficult); also easily propagated from rhizome divisions, root cuttings

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Collect seed in July/August; pay special attention and look for empty seed coats, as this as been an issue for two other spp. of *Asarum*. Divide rhizomes in early spring or fall, when plant is dormant. Take root cuttings in summer.

Seed germination (needs dormancy breaking?)

These seeds require no scarification, but may require first a warm, then a cold/moist stratification to simulate climatic changes from when seeds are sown (typically in April) until their normal emergence the next spring.

Seed life (can be stored, short shelf-life, long shelf-life)

Can be stored for a short time with reasonable expectation of germination success.

Recommended seed storage conditions

Store in cool dry space, like refrigerator, for fall and winter after harvesting; sow outdoors in April for plants the following spring.

Propagation recommendations (plant seeds, vegetative parts, cuttings, etc.)

Due to high frequency of unviable/absentee seeds, I would recommend propagating by rhizome divisions, because this method can be done either in early spring or in fall, allowing for easy, reliable reproduction within a broad time range.

Soil or medium requirements (inoculum necessary?)

If propagating from seed, pay special attention to emergence, as death of the radicle tips causes high mortality in other spp. of *Asarum* seedlings. Germinated seedlings should be transferred immediately to high OM media and kept outdoors. For root cuttings, these should be started in a sand medium and planted out in the fall. No innoculum necessary.

Installation form

Seed – free; low success rate, many potential problems along the way; beneficial in increasing genetic diversity of populations
Rhizome – also free; can be taken at two times during the year, which allows for flexibility in restoration project timelines; consistently propagated with success.
Root cuttings – can be taken only during summer, and must be planted in fall; high potential for success of plants.

Recommended planting density

Plant 1 cm deep with the tip of the rhizome at soil level. Space about 30cm (1ft.) apart.

Care requirements after installed

Mulch planted rhizomes to ensure adequate moisture; as they prefer naturally wet environments, additional watering should not be necessary.

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan

Slow-growing plant, but readily self-propagates by seed when established.

Sources cited

Deno, Norman C. Seed Germination Theory and Practice, Aug. 1991.

Leigh, Michael. 'Grow Your Own Native Landscape: A Guide to Identifying, Propagating, and Landscaping with Western Washington Native Plants. Portland: Timber Press, 1986.

Rose, Robin et al. Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants. Corvallis: OSU Press, 1998.

USDA Forest Service Fire Effects Information System page for *Asarum caudatum:* http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/forb/asacau/all.html

Data compiled by

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