

## *Morella californica*

a.k.a. “*Myrica californica*”

California wax-myrtle/Pacific wax-myrtle/Pacific bayberry



Source: <http://www.calflora.net/bloomingplants/californiawaxmyrtle.html>



Source: <http://www.geo.arizona.edu/palynology/pid00047.html>

### Range

Along the western U.S. coast from southern California to Gray’s Harbor, Washington. An isolated population also exists on the west coast of Vancouver Island. (2)



Source: <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/maps>

### Climate, elevation:

- coastal climates with rainfall between 40 and 70” (5)
- elevation below 500’ (1)

### Local occurrence (where, how common)

It can commonly be found in:

- coastal sage scrub community
- chaparral community (1)

### Habitat preferences

The California wax-myrtle prefers sunny stabilized dunes or canyons and moist slopes. (1,3)

**Plant strategy type/successional stage (stress-tolerator, competitor, weedy/colonizer, seral, late successional)**

California wax-myrtle tolerates high salinity. It is intolerant of shade, fire and drought.

**Associated species**

*Gaultheria shallon* (salal), *Vaccinium ovatum* (California huckleberry), *Rhododendron macrophyllum* (Pacific rhododendron), *Rubus ursinus* (California blackberry), *Baccharis pilularis* (coyotebrush), *Pinus contorta* var. *contorta* (lodgepole pine), *Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir)

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

The plant may be collected as seeds or cuttings. Layering is also effective, and is less time-consuming. (3)

**Collection restrictions or guidelines**

Seed collection should be done in the fall. (3)

The blue-grey berries are collected as late as January in warmer climates.

Hardwood cuttings may be taken between November 1<sup>st</sup> and January 31<sup>st</sup>. (4)

**Seed germination (needs dormancy breaking?)**

Seeds require 3 months stratification. The waxy coating should be removed prior to stratification by soaking clean seeds overnight. Germination may take more than 100 days. (3)

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

Seeds may be stored.

**Recommended seed storage conditions**

Store with waxy coating in dark, dry conditions.

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

Seed germination requires cold stratification. If time is a factor, layering is a much faster propagation method.

**Soil or medium requirements (inoculum necessary?)**

It prefers a peaty, slightly acidic soil. (3)

Soil texture should be medium to coarse. (5)

Soil pH should be between 6.0 and 7.5.

**Installation form (form, potential for successful outcomes, cost)**

Not specified.

**Recommended planting density**

Planting density per acre should be between 700 and 1700. (5)

**Care requirements after installed (water weekly, water once etc.)**

Soil should be kept moist.

**Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan**

Growth is moderate and its lifespan is long. (5)

### Sources cited

1. <http://www.calflora.net/bloomingplants/californiawaxmyrtle.html>
2. Pojar, Jim, Mackinnon, Andy. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast. Canada: Lone Pine, 1994.
3. Kruckeberg, A.R. Gardening with Native Plants. University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 1982.
4. <http://www.nativeplantnetwork.org/>
5. <http://plants.usda.gov/>

**Data compiled by:** Julia Walker, 5/28/2005