

## *Tolmiea menziesii*



*Flowers (blooms from April - August)*

Picture source: Washington Native Plant Society webpage  
([http://www.wnps.org/plants/tolmiea\\_menziesii.html](http://www.wnps.org/plants/tolmiea_menziesii.html))



*Growth Habit (plantlets visible on older leaves)*

Picture source: Virginia Lohr, Professor, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, WSU  
(<http://classes.hortla.wsu.edu/hort232/list4/Tolmiea.html>)

### **Species (common name, Latin name)**

Piggyback Plant/Youth on Age/ Thousand Mothers, *Tolmiea menziesii* (Pursh) Torr. & Gray (3)

### **Range**

Southern Alaska to Central California from the foothills of the Cascades to the Coast (1)



Source: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service ([http://plants.usda.gov/cgi\\_bin/topics.cgi?earl=plant\\_profile.cgi&symbol=TOME](http://plants.usda.gov/cgi_bin/topics.cgi?earl=plant_profile.cgi&symbol=TOME))

## Climate, elevation

*Tolmiea menziesii* typically grows in moist climates at lower elevations. (1)

It tolerates:

- rainfall from 98-1223 cm (3)
- elevation between 0 and 5905 feet (6)

## Local occurrence (where, how common)

It can commonly be found in several communities: Douglas fir forests, red fir forests, mixed evergreen forests, and redwood forests. (3)

*Tolmiea menziesii* is typically found in naturally occurring forested wetlands, usually alongside streams. (6)

## Habitat preferences

*Tolmiea menziesii* prefers to grow along shady stream banks in moist forests. (1)

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

While this information is not specifically listed in the available literature, *Tolmiea menziesii* occurs most commonly in mid to late successional forested communities. The plant is sometimes found in association with red alder on early successional sites. It is tolerant of shade and varying moisture levels.

## Associated species

*Pseudotsuga menziesii* (Douglas fir), *Cornus stolonifera* (red osier dogwood), *Polystichum munitum* (sword fern), *Thuja plicata* (Western red cedar), *Alnus rubra* (red alder), *Vaccinium parvifolium* (red huckleberry), *Rubus spectabilis* (salmonberry), *Lysichitum americanum* (skunk cabbage), *Athyrium filix-femina* (lady fern), *Tellima grandiflora* (fringecup) (3,4)

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

The plant may be collected as seed, but is far more commonly propagated by plantlets, leaf cuttings or divisions. The plantlets arise from the point of petiole attachment and are easily removed with little damage to the plant. (2)

## Collection restrictions or guidelines

- Handling the leaves may cause minor skin irritation, but this is temporary. Gloves may be used. (5)
- If attempting seed propagation collection should be done in the fall. (1,7)

## Seed germination (needs dormancy breaking?)

Information is not available.

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

Information is not available.

### **Recommended seed storage conditions**

Information is not available.

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

- The simplest method is to remove plantlets or take leaf cuttings.
- To divide: either separate the root ball or remove offshoots.
- To start from seed: start outdoors mid-winter in covered containers, coldframe or unheated greenhouse (7)

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

The soil pH must be between 5 and 7. (3)

Soil should have good drainage. (2)

Inoculum is not necessary.

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

### **Recommended planting density**

Plants should be spaced 18-24 in. (45-60 cm). (7)

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

Keep the soil evenly moist. The piggyback plant prefers higher humidity and good drainage. (2)

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

Evergreen (3) perennial, 20 inches tall, 16 inches spread (2)

Due to its strong ability to reproduce and spread vegetatively its lifespan is indeterminate. When the plant begins to appear sparse and the leaf density is low, cut back the plant and root the cuttings to increase the total number of individually rooted plants.

### **Sources cited**

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**Data compiled by:** Julia Walker, 13 April 2005