Symphoricarpos oreophilus
Mountain snowberry, Utah snowberry

Photos: Ó Mark Turner and Ó Dave Powell

Range
Wide range from British Columbia east to Montana, south to Texas and northern Mexico. Species in Washington, and most of western United States, is *S. oreophilus* var. *utahensis* (1,2).

Climate, elevation
Grows from the foothills to subalpine elevations (4)

Local occurrence
Common shrub in many plant communities east of the Cascades (2)

Habitat preferences
Grows in open areas of forests and dry meadows and on open slopes; fairly shade intolerant; prefers moist, well-drained soil but will grow in sandy to clay loam soil. (1,4)

Plant strategy type/successional stage
Establishes in the early seral stages, but usually lasts into the climax community. (6)

Associated species
Dominant shrub species in several plant communities, associated with the Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), subalpine fir (*A. lasiocarpa*), and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) series.

In Douglas fir plant communities, mountain snowberry is associated with Rocky mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), heartleaf arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*), bristly black currant (*Ribes lacustre*), Saskatoon serviceberry, snowbrush ceanothus (*Ceanothus velutinus*), elk sedge (*Carex geyeri*), fireweed, and butterweed (*Senecio* spp.)

In quaking aspen plant communities, mountain snowberry is often an understory species associated with western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Wood's rose (*Rosa woodsii*), black chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana* var. *melanocarpa*), fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*), Saskatoon serviceberry

(*Amelanchier alnifolia*), blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cerulea*), lupine (*Lupinus* spp.) and sticky geranium (*Geranium viscosissimum*). (6)

May be collected as
Seed, layered branches, cuttings (1)

Collection restrictions or guidelines
No collection restrictions

Seed germination
Seeds exhibit double dormancy, requiring both acid scarification and then stratification for 4 to 6 months. When planted in spring, seed must undergo both treatments, while those planted in fall and winter only require acid scarification. (1,3)

Seed life
When properly stored, seeds can remain viable for up to 10 years. (6)

Recommended seed storage conditions
After harvest, seed should be macerated in water to remove flesh and dried thoroughly. Seeds should be stored dry. (1)

Propagation recommendations (plant seeds, vegetative parts, cuttings, etc.)
Direct seeding in fall and winter is recommended for well-drained sites.
Mountain snowberry is also easily propagated by stem cuttings, and by transplanting layered stems.
Dig up rooted branches early in spring, before leaves have emerged. (5,6)

Soil or medium requirements
Prefers moist, well-drained soil and tolerates a wide pH range. (1,6)

Installation form
Direct seeding and transplanting container stock are both successful methods. (6)

Recommended planting density
1700-2700 plants/acre (2)

Care requirements after installed (water weekly, water once etc.)
After installed, young plants must be watered regularly, as they are particularly sensitive to drought for the first year (1)

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan
Grows to 0.6 to 1.2 m high; long lifespan, moderate growth rate; sometimes has a trailing form, with arching branches (1,2,6)

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