

Plant Data Sheet



Gerald and Buff Corsi © California Academy of Sciences

Vaccinium parvifolium

Family Scientific name: Ericaceae

Family Common name: Heath

Genus: Vaccinium

Species: parvifolium

Common name: Red Huckleberry

Species authority: Smith

Species Code per USDA plant database: VAPA

Plant morphology: Erect shrub to 4 m tall; branches bright green, very strongly angled; leaves alternate, mostly deciduous and oval; flowers greenish-yellow or pinkish urn-shaped; fruits bright-red berries to 1 cm across, tart and edible ^{1,4}

General distribution: *Vaccinium parvifolium* has been identified in the forests of Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, Oregon and California. According to the Fire Effects Information System database, it grows in the following ecosystems along the western coast^{2,3}:

FRES20 Douglas-Fir

FRES23 Fir-Spruce

FRES24 Hemlock-Sitka Spruce

FRES27 Redwood

FRES28 Western hardwoods

Habitat: *V. parvifolium* is found in coniferous forests in dry to slightly moist, loamy soil. It prefers partial to full shade and likes loamy, acid soils. It thrives in acid soils and frequently sprouts in rotting logs and stumps.^{1,4,7}

Associated plant species: In coastal forests *V. parvifolium* is commonly found growing with *Rubus spectabilis* (salmonberry), *R. ursinus* (trailing blackberry), *R. parviflorus* (thimbleberry), *Gaultheria shallon* (salal), *Berberis nervosa* (dwarf Oregon-grape), *Cornus canadensis* (bunchberry), *Athyrium filix-femina* (lady fern), and *Gymnocarpium* spp. (oak fern).²

Propogation Methods: *V. parvifolium* can be successfully propogated by seed, layering or cuttings.

seed - To grow from seed, collect the ripe, red fruit during August and September and remove pulp from the seeds manually or in a blender with water. Dry the separated seeds at 15-21°C for at least two days. Dried seeds are viable for up to twelve years when stored in refrigeration. To acheive germination, expose the seeds to alternating temperature and light regimes of 28°C light for 14 hours and then 13°C dark for 10 hours a day.² Many *Vaccinium* species require 1-3 months of cold stratification for germination. However, research on stratification with species *parvifolium* is inconclusive. Plant seedlings in a mixture of sand and peat and transplant after seven weeks. Outplant the seedlings after the first growing season. Be patient as seedlings can be slow to sprout!^{5,6,7}

layering - Take a branch of an established shrub and bend to the ground. Bury several inches of the stem under a few inches of soil while leaving the rest of the branch and leaves above ground. The section of buried stem will eventually develop roots, resulting in a new, separate shrub. This can be done in the spring when the plant is dormant or in the summer after mature leaves have formed.

cutting - Cuttings should be taken during the dormant season. Root cuttings in a mixture of peat and perlite.

Seed density: 2,500,000 seeds/lb

Vaccinium parvifolium seeds



Steve Hurst © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

References:

¹Pojar, Jim and Andy MacKinnon, comp. and ed. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska. British Columbia: Lone Pine, 1994.

²Tirmenstein, Debra A. 1990. *Vaccinium parvifolium*. In: Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (Producer).

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/vacpar/all.html>

³USDA, NRCS. 2007. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 7 April 2007). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/charProfile?symbol=VAPA>

⁴<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php?Genus=Vaccinium&Species=parvifolium>

⁵Potash, Laura L. and Carol A. Aubry. comp. and ed. Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Native Plant Notebook. 2nd ed. Washington: North Cascades Institute, 1997.

⁶Leigh, Michael. Grow Your Own Native Landscape: A Guide to Identifying, Propagating and Landscaping with Western Washington Native Plants. Washington: Native Plant Salvage Project, WSU Cooperative Extension, 1999.

⁷Rose, Robin, and Caryn E. C. Chachulski, and Diane L. Haase. Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants. Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1998.

Compiled by Deanna Goldy, 2007

Plant Data Sheet

Species (common name, Latin name)

Red huckleberry, *Vaccinium parvifolium*

Range

Southwestern Alaska to central California.

Climate, elevation

Low elevations.

Local occurrence (where, how common)

Coniferous forest, often at forest edges or under canopy openings.

Habitat preferences

Red huckleberry occurs in mixed evergreen forests, particularly abundant in wet or dry, coastal western hemlock or western hemlock-Sitka spruce forests.

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

Associated species

Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, and Salal.

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

Seeds and cuttings.

Collection restrictions or guidelines

Seeds can be picked in July – August when fruit is ripe.

Seed germination (needs dormancy breaking?)

To germinate stored seeds, alternate warm and light conditions (28°C for 14 hrs/day) with cool and dark conditions (13 for 10 hrs/day).

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

Seeds can be stored in a refrigerator for up to 12 years.

Recommended seed storage conditions

Dry seeds at 15-21°C for 2 days

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

Seed, container, bare root, cuttings.

Soil or medium requirements (inoculum necessary?)

Adapted to coarse and medium textured soils, low moisture use.

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

Seeds, container, cuttings, or bare root.

Recommended planting density

1800 to 11000 plants per acre.

Care requirements after installed (water weekly, water once etc.)
Water moderately for first year, prefers partial sun.

Normal rate of growth or spread; lifespan
Slow growing, erect shrub to 4 meters tall, moderate lifespan.

Sources cited

Pojar, J. and A. MacKinnon. 1994. Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast
Washington, Oregon British Columbia & Alaska. BC Ministry of Forests and Lone
Pine Publishing, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada p.57

The Plants Database. <http://plantsdatabase.com>

Propagation by Seed.

http://www.volws.bc.ca/resources/Plants/Plant_index/Seed_Propagation.htm

Doug Schmitt