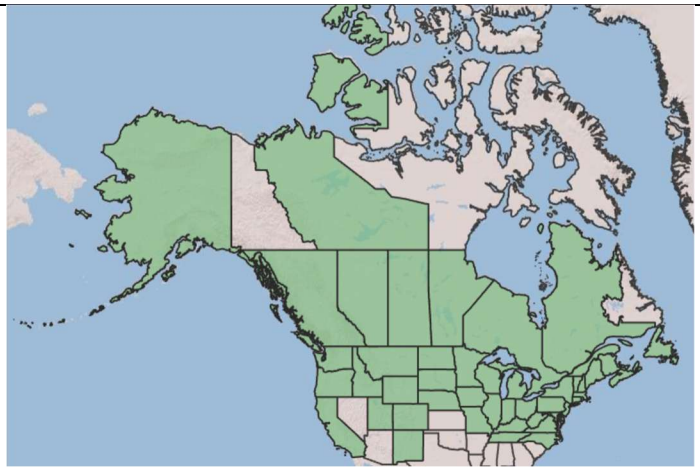
Plant Propagation Protocol for *Symphoricarpos albus*

ESRM 412 – Native Plant Production

URL: https://courses.washington.edu/esrm412/protocols/2026/SYAL.pdf

TAXONOMY	
Plant Family	
Scientific Name	Caprifoliaceae
Common Name	Honeysuckle
Species Scientific Name	
Scientific Name	*Symphoricarpos albus* (L.) S.F. Blake
Varieties	*Symphoricarpos albus* (L.) S.F. Blake var. *albus;* *Symphoricarpos albus* (L.) S.F. Blake var. *pauciflorus* (W.J. Rob. ex A. Gray) S.F. Blake; *Symphoricarpos albus* (L.) S.F. Blake var. *laevigatus* (Fernald) S.F. Blake; *Symphoricarpos albus* (L.) S.F. Blake var. *mollis* (Nutt.) D.D. Keck
Sub-species	N/A
Cultivar	N/A
Common Synonym(s)	*Symphoricarpos racemosus* Michx.*;* *Symphoricarpos rivularis* Suksd.; *Symphoricarpos pauciflorus* W.J. Rob. ex A. Gray; *Symphoricarpos mollis* Nutt.
Common Name(s)	Common snowberry, snowberry, waxberry (Pojar et al. 1994), white coralberry (McWilliams 2000), upright snowberry
Species Code (as per USDA Plants database)	SYAL
GENERAL INFORMATION	
Geographical range	  Source: USDA Plants Database Green indicates presence of *Symphoricarpos albus*
Ecological distribution	Conifer forests, riparian woodlands, open/disturbed sites (such as clearcuts). Excellent erosion control. Grows well in various environments (Pojar et al. 1994; U.S. Department of Agriculture 2026)

Climate and elevation range	Versatile and hardy species found in low to middle elevations, dry to moist climate, shaded to open spaces
Local habitat and abundance	Common in forest understories, often associated with *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Gaultheria shallon*, *Mahonia* spp., and *Polystichum munitum.* Also common in open and disturbed areas.
Plant strategy type / successional stage	Considered both climax and seral, occurs in all successional stages. Can be a dominant species in early successional environments (Pojar et al. 1994; McWilliams 2000). Stress-tolerator.
Plant characteristics	 Image: J.S. Peterson, 2003 (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2026) Deciduous perennial shrub, 0.5-2m tall, white berries persist into winter. Opposite, round/oval 2-5 cm long leaves. Flowers are pink or white, 5-7 mm long, bell shaped. (Pojar et al. 1994). Rhizomatous growth, has resprout ability, long lifespan (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2026).
PROPAGATION DETAILS: FROM SEED	
Ecotype	N/A
Propagation Goal	Plants
Propagation Method	Seed
Product Type	Container (plug)
Stock Type	N/A
Time to Grow	About 18 months
Target Specifications	Woody shrub: hardened for out planting, well established roots
Propagule Collection Instructions	Collect berries in fall after they reach maturity (Favorite 2002). Berries will be white with 2 seeds inside, and the pulp of ripened fruit will be white or clear (Majerus 2003). Best if berries are handpicked and stored in a ziplock or nylon bag until processing (Barner 2007). They can be kept for a couple of weeks in these conditions.
Propagule Processing/Propagule Characteristics	Seeds are small and hard, with a density of 72,000 seeds/lb (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023). Germination is typically delayed and dormancy treatments are performed over long periods of time. Seeds retain viability in storage at relatively high rates. To store seeds, remove flesh, air dry, and store at around 5 °C (Scianna 2003; Walker)

	Cleaning and storage: One strategy is to macerate berries with water and then float debris off. Dry remaining pulp and seeds and then clean seeds. Seeds should be stored around 5 °C, and will retain relatively high rates of viability (Barner 2007; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 2008). Another strategy is to dry fruit and then separate seeds from fruit using a rubbing board (McWilliams 2000).
Pre-Planting Propagule Treatments	Dormancy treatment: Seeds require 2-3 months of warm moist stratification followed by 3-5 months of cold stratification. Seeds may be stratified in bags with moist vermiculite, perlite or peat or sown ¼ inch deep in potting mix (Majerus 2003; Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023; Young 2001).
Growing Area Preparation / Annual Practices for Perennial Crops	Controlled greenhouse where seeds are covered with a media (Young 2001). Greenhouse is especially important for the first winter. Media should include sand and peat (Favorite 2002). Seeds should receive full sun (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023).
Establishment Phase Details	Sow seeds shallowly. Maintain moisture. Seeds germinate in approximately 240 days and should then be transplanted into individual pots (Young 2001).
Length of Establishment Phase	7-8 months
Active Growth Phase	Seedlings grow slowly during the first season. Avoid overwatering.
Length of Active Growth Phase	One growing season, which is around 5-7 months in the pacific northwest (Rose 1998; U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service 2008).
Hardening Phase	Containers should be moved from the controlled greenhouse to a hoop house that allows for ventilation without cooling when seedlings are about 2 months old. They can then stay in the hoop house for 2-4 weeks, ideally with full sun, summer conditions. Then, a shade cloth can be utilized until temperatures cool in the fall (Majerus 2003).
Length of Hardening Phase	1-2 months (Majerus 2003)
Harvesting, Storage and Shipping	Once hardening phase is complete, seedings can be shipped in containers they have been planted in. Bare root can also be an effective method of shipping and storing (Majerus 2003).
Length of Storage	When plants are established and dormant, they can be stored as bare root for several weeks overwinter in temperatures of 1-3 °C (Majerus 2003).
Guidelines for Outplanting / Performance on Typical Sites	Seedlings are successful in many soil types and various conditions, although they prefer clay soils (Favorite 2002). Young 2001 found a 75% survival for outplantings.
Other Comments	Ecological significance: well-adapted for restoration projects, such as providing erosion control, and landscaping. Able to thrive in various soil types (McWilliams 2000) Cultural significance: *Symphoricarpos albus* berries were used by the Stl'atl'imx people in small quantities to settle the stomach after eating especially fatty food

	(Pojar et al. 1994). Berries were also rubbed on wounds and used for various ailments and roots were steeped as a tea for consumption after birth (Favorite 2002).
PROPAGATION DETAILS: VEGETATIVE	
Ecotype	N/A
Propagation Goal	Plants
Propagation Method	Vegetative
Product Type	Container (plug) or rooted cuttings
Stock Type	N/A
Time to Grow	About 6 months
Target Specifications	Well-rooted (woody, fibrous root system), established plug, hardened stem, branched shrub
Propagule Collection Instructions	For hardwood cuttings, collect 6-8 in. cuttings from dormant hardwood stems in the winter (December-February). Collect softwood and semi-hardwood cuttings in the summer (June-August). The base of each cutting should be at least 7 mm in diameter (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023; Scianna 2003).
Propagule Processing/Propagule Characteristics	Keep cuttings moist. Cuttings can be stored for several weeks at just above freezing. (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023; Scianna 2003).
Pre-Planting Propagule Treatments	Trim cuttings to 5-6 inches, removing all buds, leaves or branches from the lower 2-3 inches. Cut the base of the cutting at an angle and wound it with a 1 inch wound just below the cambium layer. Use a 1,000 to 3,000 ppm IBA talc rooting compound on the end of the cutting (Scianna 2003).
Growing Area Preparation / Annual Practices for Perennial Crops	The growing media should be comprised of sand or a mix of sand and perlite, vermiculite, or both, or a mix of perlite and vermiculite (Scianna 2003).
Establishment Phase Details	Keep at 20-27 °C (ideally by using a bottom heater) for 4-6 weeks and keep moist using a mister (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023; Scianna 2003).
Length of Establishment Phase	4-6 weeks
Active Growth Phase	After roots have developed, transplant to individual pots with space for roots to grow. Use nursey potting media with fertilizer for this stage. Place in shade for 4-6 weeks before allowing full sun exposure (Natural Resources Conservation Service 2023). According to Scianna 2003, the active growth phase may take up to 16 weeks.
Length of Active Growth Phase	16 weeks
Hardening Phase	Can be moved to an outdoor hoophouse in late spring/early summer, ideally in full sun for 2-4 weeks early in the season. They should then have partial shade until the end of summer (Scianna 2003).
Length of Hardening Phase	End of active growth phase until winter. Minimum of 30 days.

Harvesting, Storage and Shipping	Plants may be shipped with or without their containers.
Length of Storage	
Guidelines for Outplanting / Performance on Typical Sites	Plant in full sun to partial shade, with 3-4 or more feet of spacing between plants. Keep soil moist while roots establish. *Symphoricarpos albus* has high success rate in outplanting sites.
Other Comments	Vegetative propagation using cuttings is often the preferred method to propagate *Symphoricarpos albus* because of the necessary time and requirements of seed germination (Young 2001).
INFORMATION SOURCES	
References	Favorite, J. (2002). *Plant guide: Snowberry (Symphoricarpos albus (L.) Blake)*. USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center. http://www.plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_syal.pdf (Accessed April 27, 2026) Majerus, M. E. (2003). *Propagation protocol for production of container Symphoricarpos albus (L.) Blake plants*. USDA NRCS Bridger Plant Materials Center. In Native Plant Network. University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources, Forest Research Nursery. http://www.nativeplantnetwork.org (Accessed April 27, 2026) McWilliams, J. (2000). *Symphoricarpos albus*. Fire Effects Information System. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory. https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/shrub/symalb/all.html (Accessed April 27, 2026) Natural Resources Conservation Service. (2023). *Prospectors Germplasm: Common Snowberry*. Bridger Plant Materials Center. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plantmaterials/mtpmcrb14039.pdf (Accessed April 27, 2026) Pojar, J., Mackinnon, A., & Alaback, P. B. (1994). *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia & Alaska*. Lone Pine Publishing. Rose, R. (1998). *Propagation of Pacific Northwest native plants*. Oregon State University Press. Scianna, J. (2003). *Protocol information: Symphoricarpos (albus)*. Native Plant Network. https://npn.rngr.net/renderNPNProtocolDetails?selectedProtocolIds=caprifoliaceae-symphoricarpos-2796 (Accessed April 27, 2026)

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Other Sources Consulted	Hidayati, S. N., Baskin, J. M., & Baskin, C. C. (2001). Dormancy-breaking and germination requirements for seeds of *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus* (Caprifoliaceae). *American Journal of Botany, 88*(8), 1444–1451. Potter, R., Lapp, J., Wick, D., Luna, T., Evans, J., Hosokawa, J., & Corey, S. (2008). *Propagation protocol for vegetative production of container Symphoricarpos albus (L.) Blake var. laevigatus plants (3L containers)*. Native Plant Network. University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources, Forest Research Nursery. http://www.nativeplantnetwork.org (Accessed April 27, 2026)
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