

Silver Buffaloberry



Silver Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea*)

General Description

A tall, thorny, thicket-forming native shrub. Well adapted to dry, moderately alkaline and saline soils. Tolerates infertile soils, in part because of its ability to fix and assimilate atmospheric nitrogen. Berries used for jellies.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Opposite.

Bud Color - Silvery.

Bud Size - Small, solitary or multiple, stalked, oblong.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, oblong-elliptical.

Leaf Margins - Entire.

Leaf Surface - Finely-scaled, pubescent.

Leaf Length - 1 to 2 inches.

Leaf Width - 1/4 to 5/8 inch.

Leaf Color - Silvery-gray on both surfaces.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Dioecious.

Flower Color - Yellowish.

Fruit Type - Drupe-like, insipid, ovoid.

Fruit Color - Predominately red, however, some female plants can produce yellow fruits.

Form

Growth Habit - Loosely branched shrub of rounded outline.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; fine, winter.

Crown Height - 6 to 14 feet.

Crown Width - 8 to 14 feet.

Bark Color - Brown.

Root System - Spreading.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Grows well in most soils.

Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0. Adapted to moderately alkaline and saline soils.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G, 8, 9C, 9L.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone - 2.

Water

Drought tolerant. Not adapted to wet, poorly-drained sites.

Light

Full sun.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Medium to tall shrub for farmstead and field windbreaks, riparian plantings, and highway beautification.

Wildlife

Highly important for mule deer browse. Ideal cover and nesting site for many birds. Preferred food source of many songbirds and sharptail grouse. Good late winter food source for birds.

Agroforestry Products

Food - Fruit processed as jams and jellies.

Urban/Recreational

Ornamental foliage and fruit, but limited in use because of thorns and suckering habit.

Cultivated Varieties

Sakakawea Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argentea* 'Sakakawea')

- Released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Bismarck, North Dakota.

Related Species

Russet Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*)

Russian-olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)

Sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)

Silverberry (*E. commutata*)

Pests

Common diseases include stem decay and branch canker. Deer commonly browse the twigs and leaves. Stems are sometimes broken by snow.