Skunkbush or Lemonade Sumac
Skunkbush or Lemonade Sumac (Rhus trilobata)

**General Description**
Native to the Northern Plains. Spreading shrub, smaller and finer-textured leaves than Fragrant Sumac. Forms a dense mass of stems and leaves. Scented leaves and light yellow flowers.

**Leaves and Buds**
Bud Arrangement - Alternate.
Bud Color - Yellow, pubescent, covered by leaf scar.
Bud Size - Small.
Leaf Type and Shape - Trifoliate.
Leaf Margins - Acute to acuminate, crenate-serrate.
Leaf Surface - Nearly glabrous.
Leaf Length - 1 to 2½ inches; leaflets 3/4 to 1¼ inches.
Leaf Width - 1 to 2½ inches; leaflets 1/2 to 3/4 inch.
Leaf Color - Soft green as leaflets unfold, then turning a deep blue-green in summer, and commonly yellow in autumn.

**Flowers and Fruits**
Flower Type - Polygamous or dioecious, male catkins 1/2 to 1 inch long, female produces short panicles at the ends of branches.
Flower Color - Greenish-yellow.
Fruit Type - Hairy drupe, 1/4 inch in diameter, females only.
Fruit Color - Red.

**Form**
Growth Habit - Ascending, new branchlets hairy.
Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium, winter.
Crown Height - 3 to 8 feet.
Crown Width - 4 to 10 feet.
Bark Color - Slightly pubescent, aromatically fragrant when bruised; leaf scars circular, distinctly raised.
Root System - Fibrous, spreading.

**Environmental Requirements**

**Soils**
Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soils.
Soil pH - 5.5 to 8.0.
Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G, 8, 9C, 9L.

**Cold Hardiness**
USDA Zone 3.

**Water**
Moderately drought tolerant. Survives harsh growing conditions of North Dakota Badlands.

**Light**
Full sun, to partial (1/2 to 3/4) shade.

**Uses**

**Conservation/Windbreaks**
Small to medium shrub for farmstead windbreaks and riparian plantings.

**Wildlife**
Important fall and winter food for songbirds and emergency winter food for game birds. Excellent roosting and loafing ground cover. Preferred nesting site for birds.

**Agroforestry Products**
Wood - Slender branches are split for weaving baskets.
Food - Drupes used for fresh drink.
Medicinal - Used as an astringent, aromatic, mouthwash, and diuretic.

**Urban/Recreational**
Massing, naturalizing. Fast cover for bank stabilization. Duller foliage than *R. aromatica*.

**Cultivated Varieties**
Bighorn Sumac (*R. trilobata* 'Bighorn') - Released by USDA-NRCS, Plant Materials Center, Los Lunas, New Mexico, as a cultivar seed strain.

**Related Species**
Fragrant Sumac (*Rhus aromatica*)

**Pests**
No major pest problems.