Smooth Sumac
Smooth Sumac  
(*Rhus glabra*)

**General Description**
A large, loose, open-spreading shrub with a flattish crown. Usually grows in masses and suckers profusely. Outstanding red fall color. Similar to Staghorn sumac but shorter.

**Leaves and Buds**
Bud Arrangement - Alternate.
Bud Color - Gray-brown.
Bud Size - Small, round-ovoid with leaf scar almost completely encircling the bud, pubescent.
Leaf Type and Shape - Pinnately-compound, 11 to 31 leaflets per leaf.
Leaf Margins - Leaflets are acuminate, serrate.
Leaf Surface - Smooth, glaucous beneath.
Leaf Length - 12 to 16 inches; leaflets 2 to 5 inches.
Leaf Width - 4 to 8 inches; leaflets 1/2 to 1 inch.
Leaf Color - Dark green in summer, showy red leaves in autumn.

**Flowers and Fruits**
Flower Type - Dioecious, borne in dense 6 to 9 inch panicles.
Flower Color - Greenish.
Fruit Type - Hairy drupe in clusters.
Fruit Color - Red or scarlet.
Special Features - Red to rusty-red fruit cluster in autumn.

**Form**
Growth Habit - Upright, stout, branching, forms thicket, umbrella-like canopy.
Texture - Medium-coarse, summer; medium-coarse, winter.
Crown Height - 5 to 15 feet.
Crown Width - 10 to 15 feet.
Bark Color - Branches glabrous, glaucous, brownish.
Root System - Fibrous, spreading root system, suckering habit.

**Environmental Requirements**

**Soils**
Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soil types.
Soil pH - 5.0 to 8.0.
Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 1K, 3, 4, 4C, 5, 6D, 6G.

**Cold Hardiness**
USDA Zone 3.

**Water**
Moderately drought tolerant. Available water determines mature plant height.

**Light**
Full sun, to partial shade.

**Uses**

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

**Wildlife**
Excellent escape and nesting ground cover.

**Agroforestry Products**
Wood - Leaves and roots used in dyeing and tanning leather.
Food - Drupes eaten fresh or processed into a lemonade drink.
Medicinal - Extracts used as a tonic, astringent, and antiseptic; drupes as refrigerant and diuretic, and root bark as a tea to stop hemorrhaging.

**Urban/Recreational**

**Cultivated Varieties**
Cutleaf Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra* 'Laciniata')

**Related Species**
Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

**Pests**
No major pest problems. A stem wilt sometimes occurs.