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# Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany in the Landscape

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## *Cercocarpus ledifolius*

### Curl-leaf mountain mahogany



**Description:** Curl-leaf mountain mahogany is a marvelous large shrub to small tree that would look good in any ornamental landscape, but is especially adapted for low-water landscapes. It is the only broadleaf evergreen tree in the Intermountain West, and as such it offers an interesting winter contrast to the standard landscape conifer. It achieves a rather gnarly and quite intriguing shape with age. Seeds have long, cork-screw, feather-like plumes that cover the tree, creating an almost fuzzy appearance from a distance. The leaves are distinctively aromatic, evergreen and, curled under, thus its common name.

### Cultural Requirements:

- Native habitat      Dry hills and rocky slopes throughout the West at elevations from 5,000 to 10,000 feet
- Soil      Well drained, tolerates poor soil conditions; prefers coarse, rocky slopes; pH 6.0 to 9.0
- Cold Tolerance      Zones 3-8
- Drought Tolerance      High
- Salt Tolerance      Unknown
- Sun/Shade Preference      Full sun to part shade
- Transplanting      Deep tap root makes it difficult to transplant
- Propagation      Seed or hardwood stem cuttings
- Maintenance      Prune in winter; tolerates hedging or shearing
- Problems      Browsed by deer

**Landscape Value:**

- Use in the Landscape Use as a screen or for reclamation, soil stabilization, cover for wildlife; becomes multi-stemmed as a seedling; it needs training to achieve a single-trunk tree form.
- Leaves Broadleaf evergreen; shiny, dark green and leathery
- Flowers Small, inconspicuous, pale rose

	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
• Color							

- Fruit (seedheads) Long, dry achene with a 2- to 3-inch plume attached
- Form Upright shrubby
- Texture Coarse
- Ultimate Size 8 to 15 feet
- Rate of Growth Slow
- Plant Community Parkland, pinyon-juniper, shrub steppe, mountain brush
- Availability Utah's Choice selection (visit <http://www.utahschoice.org/natives/wheretobuy> for more information)
- Cultivars None of ornamental value

**Propagation**

To start seed indoors soak seed in hydrogen peroxide for up to 24 hours. Rinse well. Cold, moist stratify for 30 to 60 days. Sow seed into container and cover with ¼ inch soil. To sow seed outdoors, use a generous amount of seed and cover with ¼ inch of soil. Sow in fall and watch for germinated seedlings the following spring. Cuttings should be collected in the spring from the previous season's growth.

**Additional Photos**



Photo credits: Roger Kjelgren

## References

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