

1-2009

Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany in the Landscape

Heidi Kratsch
Utah State University

Graham Hunter

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cwel_extension

 Part of the [Horticulture Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kratsch, Heidi and Hunter, Graham, "Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany in the Landscape" (2009). *CWEL Extension Fact Sheets*. Paper 14.
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cwel_extension/14

This Factsheet is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in CWEL Extension Fact Sheets by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact dylan.burns@usu.edu.



Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany in the Landscape

Heidi Kratsch, Extension Ornamental Horticulture Specialist
Graham Hunter, Research Associate, Center for Water Efficient Landscaping

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

- Cerny, T., L. Rupp, C. Reid, and M. Kuhns. 2002. Selection and Culture of Landscape Plants in Utah: A guide for southwestern and central Utah. Utah State University Extension Bulletin HG 500.3 URL: http://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/HG_500_3.pdf
- Mee, W., J. Barnes, R. Kjelgren, R. Sutton, T. Cerny, and C. Johnson. 2003. Waterwise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT.
- Rupp, L., R. Kjelgren, J. Ernsten, and W. Varga. 1997. Shearing and Growth of Five Intermountain Native Shrub Species. *Journal of Environmental Horticulture* 15(3):123-125.
- Zeidler, Scott; Justin, John. 2003. Propagation protocol for production of field-grown *Cercocarpus ledifolius* Nutt. plants (2+0); Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Land - Lone Peak Nursery, Draper, Utah. In: Native Plant Network. URL: <http://www.nativeplantnetwork.org> (accessed 2 January 2009). Moscow (ID): University of Idaho, College of Natural Resources, Forest Research Nursery.

This fact sheet belongs to a series of fact sheets about Intermountain West native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses called "Native Plants in the Landscape." Look for others in the series by visiting <http://extension.usu.edu/htm/publications>, then clicking on 'Horticulture' and 'Native Plants'.

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Noelle E. Cockett, Vice President for Extension and Agriculture, Utah State University.