

RED-FLOWERING CURRANT



Gorge Waterway Action Society



Red-Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) OVERVIEW:

Edible Nature

Red-Flowering Currant is identified by its deciduous, shrubby, thornless stems. These stems support numerous red flowers that appear from March to June. The flowers give way to long oval berries of a subdued hue. Be aware that these berries have a mild laxative quality similar to eating high quantities of plums or prunes. Ensure that when eating the currants to spit the seeds to places you think a shrub may like to grow in the future. Help spread those seeds!



- General Information: The Red-Flowering Currant produces numerous small flowering spurs along their thornless stems. These stems can reach 3 metres in height. The deciduous leaves alternate along the stem. The leaves are rounded in 3-5 shallow lobes with deep veins. Numerous clusters of 5-25 flowers appear in March to June that are pink to deep-red in colour. This species is easily identified by its pungent Sage-like aroma.
- Habitat: Red-Flowering Currant flourishes in open woody, forest gaps, dry rocky slopes and disturbed areas from sea level to 2000m. It prefers sun or partial shade and well-drained, moderately fertile soil that is neutral to slightly acidic. They are commonly found along the British Columbia's southwest coastline.
- Horticultural Uses: Red-Flowering Currant is often used in restoration due to its drought tolerance. The beautiful flowers make its a stunning feature in gardens.

Indigenous Uses of Red-Flowering Currant

In the summer, black, waxy berries emerge from behind the bright red blossoms. These berries are edible but many deem them unpalatable due to their tart nature. but are consumed by many Indigenous peoples either fresh or dried. If eaten in sufficient quantity, the berries can be used as a mild laxative. The berries were also often dried and used to make a tea. The bark was used as a remedy for the common cold and flue.



Species Uses of Red-Flowering Currant

Red-Flowering Currant blooms in early Spring, making it an important nectar source for hummingbirds and butterflies. It also provides forage for the larvae of dozens of moth and butterfly species. It further provides nesting sites for songbirds and habitat for small mammals. Numerous bird species consume the berries while the foliage provides browse for larger herbivores.

Sit and listen near the shrubs to hear the songbirds sing!



Red-Flowering Currant Nature Question

Question:

What does the Red-Flowering Currant smell like?

Answer:

The Red-Flowering Currant is noted for its Sage-like aroma.

For a full list of information & image sources, visit our website at: <http://gorge.ca/ycp-references/>