



Gorge Waterway Action Society



Dull-Oregon Grape (*Mahonia nervosa*)

OVERVIEW:

Edible Nature

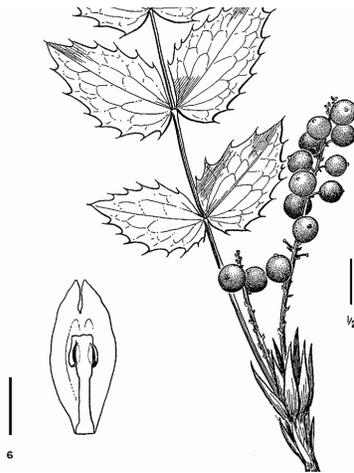
Dull-Oregon Grape is identified as a shrub with erect, evergreen stems hosting leaves with 9-19 pointed edges that are stiff and shiny. The leaves turn rust-red to purple in the winter and support numerous yellow flowers densely packed into clusters in the Spring. These yellow flowers turn to small blue berries that have a dusty white cover. The sour berries of the Dull-Oregon Grape are edible and best when mixed with other berries to sweeten the mixture.



- General Information: A staple species for the Northwest Coast, Dull-Oregon Grape is an evergreen plant with pairs of spiny leaves that grow from the stem. The species can reach heights of 60cm tall. The leaves change colour depending upon the season. It has bright yellow flowers in the Spring that create green unripe berries that turn dark blue as they ripen into the Fall.
- Habitat: Dull-Oregon Grape is found in high concentrations along the southwest coast of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. The Dull-Oregon Grape likes both dry and moist areas and is often found in Douglas-fir forests.
- Horticultural Uses: This species is commonly used as an ornamental species in gardens or found in native plant gardens aimed at supporting pollinator species.

Indigenous Uses of Dull-Oregon Grape

The berries of the Dull-Oregon Grape are edible and were collected by the Indigenous peoples of Vancouver Island in the late Spring and Summer months. They were often eaten alone or mixed with a sweeter berry like Salal. These species are often found in similar regions. Alone, the berries are quite sour, with a spicy and grape-like flavour. The bark of the stems and roots can be shredded and mixed with water to create a bright yellow dye similar to the flowers. The bark and berries are further used medicinally to cleanse the liver and eyes.



Species Uses of Coastal Strawberry

Birds, bears, and other small mammals forage on the berries of the Dull-Oregon Grape. Large herbivores forage on the spiny leaves and stems during winter months. This is especially prevalent in high snowfall areas where evergreen shrub species are the only accessible forage. Native bees are the primary pollinator of the bright yellow flowers. The native bees are attracted to the smell, colour, and shape of the flowers as they search for pollen and nectar.

Dull-Oregon Grape has great flowers to watch and photograph pollinators at!



Dull-Oregon Grape Neature Question

Question:

What flavours are the berries noted for tasting like?

Answer:

The berries of the Dull-Oregon Grape taste sour with a spicy and grape-like flavour.

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