

Volume 7, Issue 4-2009

April 2009

NW Native Plant Journal

A Monthly Web Magazine

**NW Native Huckleberries:
(your place or theirs?)**

A very different vacation

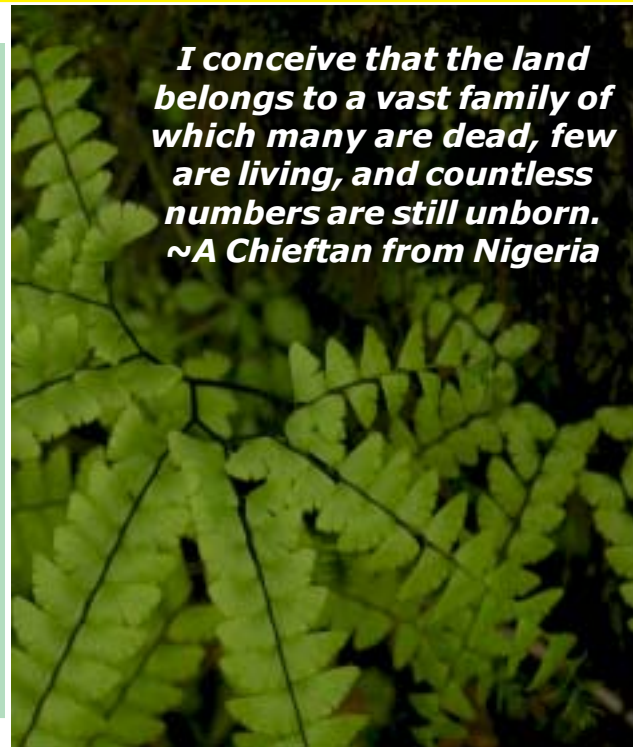
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Northwest Native Plant Journal

A Monthly Web Magazine

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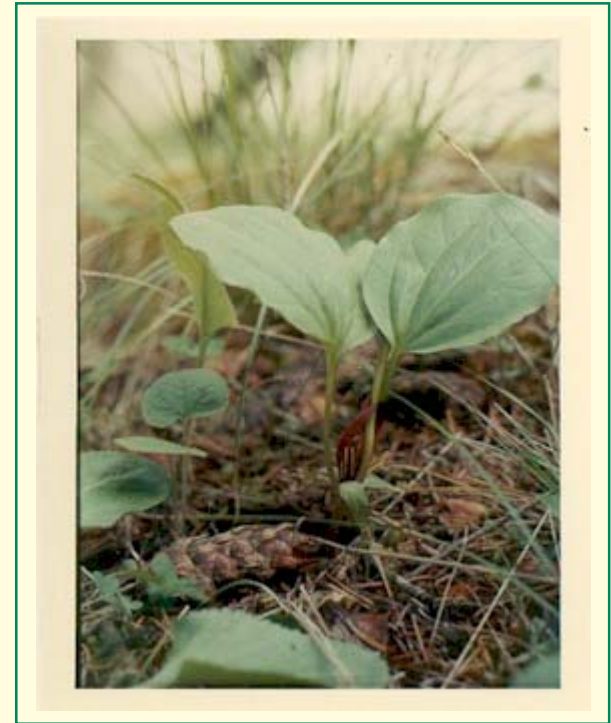
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About this Journal

I am Wally Hansen – I am a dedicated Grower, Aficionado and Passionate Lover of Northwest Native Plants.

This Journal is not 'commercial.' My goals are:

- A — To generate interest, even passion, concerning the magnificent Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest.
- B — To help you create your own Native Plant Gardens, large or small, for home or work.
- C — To help you propagate and “grow on” those species that interest you the most.
- D — To inform both Home Gardeners and interested Professionals of many disciplines concerning trends and news items from my little corner of the world.
- E — To help the reader enjoy native plants more by understanding the historical and cultural role of native plants (i.e.—use by Native Americans, Pioneers, Early Botanists, etc.).



Idaho Trillium (*Trillium petiolatum*)
Photo by Dr. Don Freeman

Writers wanted: If you have expertise for any species of Northwest plants and wish to write an article for pay for publication in this Journal, please contact Wally via e-mail at plants@nwplants.com Some articles (and pics) might deal with propagation, culture, diseases, restoration, reclamation, fertilizers, etc.

There are no passengers on Spaceship Earth. We are all crew. ~Marshall McLuhan, 1964



On the Cover

Sessile Trillium (*Trillium parviflorum*)

A beautiful 12" trillium found in Marion and Polk counties in Oregon - close to a rare status.

Occurring in the understory of hardwoods (usually Oregon Ash and sometimes Red Alder or Garry oak), this trillium needs shade and moist soil. It will even tolerate seasonal flooding.

The leaves are somewhat mottled and often larger than those of Western Trillium. The flowers sit directly on the three leaves. Their white color fades to purple with age - spectacular. The seed pods are plump with a purple dye.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott



Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth. ~Henry David Thoreau



Native plant puzzle



See photo credit in next month's journal!

Name this plant!

Some clues to help you on your quest for the correct answer:

I'm a chameleon, letting nature decide my shape and height. You may think I'm a shrub but the family that claims me are perennials. My name will mislead you if you're looking for perfume. I'm wily like a fox but named for a different animal.

If you can solve this puzzle, please let us know its botanical name. Send an email to plants@nwplants.com with your answer. You may be the plant detective of the month!

Answer to last Journal's puzzle:

Oh, no! I remain nameless!

So sorry--all who guessed were incorrect!

There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it all. ~Robert Orben



To Do List: Caring for your NW Native Garden

- 1 - Plant!
- 2 - Prune! (Wait until flowering has finished)
- 3 - Clean up whatever needs it.
- 4 - Pull those weeds before they move in permanently.
- 5 - Do housekeeping on birdhouses but make sure nobody has already claimed them.
- 6 - Take softwood cuttings to share with friends.
- 7 - Make anchor cuttings of those difficult to propagate.
 - Select branches near the ground.
 - Scrape a spot of bark off.
 - Weight the scar to the earth with wire hoops and/or rocks sufficient to hold the branch down.
 - Check for roots about once a month until you get some good ones.
 - Sever branch when roots are strong enough to support the youngster.
- 8 - Cut some branches of flowering shrubs and trees to enjoy indoors.



Squashberry (*Viburnum edule*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

I'm not an environmentalist. I'm an Earth warrior. ~Darryl Cherney, quoted in Smithsonian, April 1990

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Sparky's Corner

A special message from our frisky contributor



Sometimes I get a chance to catch up on the news, usually when Diana leaves the office door open and her Mac conveniently waiting. Sometimes this is a good idea. But sometimes it's not.

On the editorial page of Tacoma's News Tribune was this headline:

Squirrels go kablooeey?

Well that got my attention. Cheryl Tucker wrote:

I was scanning the wires for news when I spotted the slugline, "Detonating squirrels." How can anyone resist reading that?

Thinking it must be a belated April Fools story, I started reading. Unfortunately, it's real. Squirrel lovers, read at your own risk.

Parks to detonate squirrels

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — The Finch Arboretum is being overrun by ground squirrels, and Spokane Parks and Recreation is bringing in some special artillery.

The agency is using a special machine called the Rodenator Pro to detonate some of the estimated 100 to 150 squirrels tearing up the grounds.

Shades of Carl Spackler, the gopher-hating groundskeeper from "Caddyshack." The Rodenator Pro pumps propane and oxygen into the tunnels of squirrels, then sends an electric spark that causes an

explosion. The shock waves kill the squirrels and collapse their tunnels — but in a humane way, the agency said.

Spokanimal, which is the local animal shelter and Humane Society chapter, was caught by surprise by Monday's announcement.

"You're kidding," Director Gail Mackie said when she learned the news. "That borders on cruelty." Mackie said she would investigate the practice.

The parks department is warning area residents that it plans to blast squirrels all week, and to not be alarmed by noises that sound like gun shots. Parks officials said police have already been called to the arboretum by people who heard the explosions.

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Sparky's Corner, continued

Timing is crucial. Parks officials said they want to detonate their prey before the animals start reproducing. Parks officials said ground squirrels have been a minor problem for years, but their population is, well, exploding.

The squirrels dig tunnels and holes that people can trip on or fall into, the agency said. They eat new tree roots, can spread disease and are spreading to neighboring yards. Gas bombs were tried in the past, but were not effective, the agency said.

Enter the Rodenator, a product whose workings have been captured on numerous YouTube videos. The company is based in Midvale, Idaho, and promises on its Web site that its product is effective against the "saber-toothed gopher."

See this company's website if you dare at www.rodenator.com. They have action videos and everything and are recommended by some two-legged named Rush Limbaugh. Gives me the shivers.

Cheryl included some comments to this news by readers:

logicmonster @ 19:11 - Monday, April 13th, 2009

OMG - This is such an adolescent idea, why didn't I think of it?. It just proves that the kid may grow up to be an engineer, but the engineer never stops being a kid.

I'm going to do a little digging to see if this company is secretly owned by Boris and Natasha. If so, they'll be after Moose next!

papasan @ 20:58 - Monday, April 13th, 2009

"Like the cong. The Varmint Cong". Carl Spackler, "Caddyshack" So funny, but bordering on mean. Like Boris and Natasha. "We make big trouble for Moose and Squirrel."

That is enough two-legged news for me. I'm sticking to trees and my buds and my family. I think this afternoon would be a good time to go listen visit old Mr. Snorters and hear about the good old times when he was a youngster. Maybe I'll take him a nice mushroom I found this morning. He always likes to have a treat.

*Your friend,
Sparky*



An Homage to Huckleberries

Wally's favorite fruit: where to find them, recipes for cooking, how to grow your own

There is a variety of huckleberry native to almost every state in the U.S. The genus *Vaccinium* contains 43 species and 46 accepted taxa



overall. They are flowering shrubs and many bear delicious fruit which are appreciated by humans and all sorts of wildlife from tiny chipmunks to huge grizzly bears.

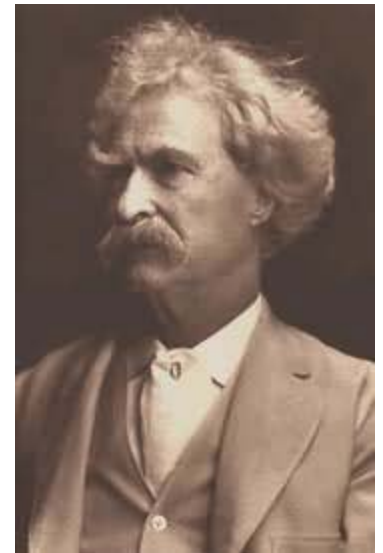
The cultivated blueberries are well known as a commercial food crop. Indeed, the blueberries sold in the market are very good but when

compared to wild hucks they do not hold a candle! Huckleberries are red, purple, blue or dark pink depending on the variety and state of ripening.

I would feel more optimistic about a bright future for man if he spent less time proving that he can outwit Nature and more time tasting her sweetness and respecting her seniority. ~Elwyn Brooks White, Essays of E.B. White, 1977

Mark Twain and Huckleberry Finn are so closely related it's nearly impossible to search for one without finding the other. I looked for a quote about the fruit but settled for this bit of common sense instead:

When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years.



As Val Kilmer playing Doc Holiday in the movie *Tombstone* might have said, "Mr. Twain, you're my huckleberry!"

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Huckleberries, continued

Huckleberry bushes are mostly around 5 feet tall though some are much shorter. They are attractive in the landscape and fairly easy to care for, requiring little pruning and appreciate an acidic soil.

The lovely small bell shaped flowers range from white to shell pink.

One gardener who wrote to us recently has created an unusual combination in her rose garden by interspersing huckleberries between the roses. She says it now one of her favorite gardens.

The U. S. Dept. of Agriculture Brochure, *Huckleberry Picking Welcome!*, is an excellent introduction to picking the most delicious native fruit in the Northwest. Print a copy to take with you on your first foray down the huckleberry trail. www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/recreation/huckleberries/documents/final-huckleberry-brochure-2007.pdf

Learn more about these marvelous shrubs in the following articles.



Here's a fun way to search out huckleberry patches! This paraglider is enjoying the popular cruising space the Chirico Trail (also referred to as Pilots Trail) on the western side of Tiger Mountain from Poo Poo Point.

A living planet is a much more complex metaphor for deity than just a bigger father with a bigger fist. If an omniscient, all-powerful Dad ignores your prayers, it's taken personally. Hear only silence long enough, and you start wondering about his power. His fairness. His very existence. But if a world mother doesn't reply, Her excuse is simple. She never claimed conceited omnipotence. She has countless others clinging to her apron strings, including myriad species unable to speak for themselves. To Her elder offspring She says - go raid the fridge. Go play outside. Go get a job. Or, better yet, lend me a hand. I have no time for idle whining. ~David Brin 🌲

Pursuing the Wild Olallie

By Jen Donier aka Celanith



Olallie means berry in the Native American Chinook Jargon and though it might mean any berry it specifically means Huckleberry.

There are twelve known species of huckleberries that grow in and around the Washington and Oregon Cascade Mountain range. They are often grouped into plants that produce red, black, purple or blue berries. The peak season for picking huckleberries occurs between mid-August to early October.

Olallie's or huckleberries, are highly sought after and people love them in shakes, drinks, ice cream, in muffins and pancakes, in pies and tarts, for jams and jellies and even in lotions and soaps today

Today each harvester is allowed three gallons of huckleberries free of charge per year. If larger quantities are needed, or you plan to sell berries, a permit is required and available at your local Ranger District. Mechanical removal of berries is not allowed, such as rakes or other brush disturbing devices.

For centuries, Native American spent summer and fall in the mountains hunting, fishing, picking berries, and celebrating the gifts of the land. Every two years, they burned the berry fields after harvest, to kill invading under brush and to insure healthy fields the following year. Native Americans in the area regarded the rituals of picking, preserving, and eating berries as a cultural event with religious importance.

Thanks to the U.S. Forest Service for the use of this heritage photograph showing a native american gathering huckleberries in beautiful, strong baskets traditionally saved for this single use.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. ~Margaret Mead

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Pursuing the Wild Olallie, continued

In 1932 by a handshake agreement between Yakama Indian Chief William Yallup and Gifford Pinchot Forest Supervisor K. P. Cecil the Sawtooth mountain area was set aside on the lower side of the forest service road for use by Native Americans. The tribes and Forest Rangers hope people pay close attention to the signs indicating the areas reserved for use by the Indians. In doing so, you are respecting the culture of another people.

Everyone has their own idea on the best way to find sweet berries. Many believe berries grown in the shade are the sweeter. However weather patterns, soil content, climate, snowpack and killing frost often determine how well and how sweet a crop of the Olallie's will be from year to year.

From about July 20th through October 1st you can find huckleberries in most of the mountain areas of the Pacific Northwest from Montana Bitterroots, Idaho's Blue Mountain Range, Sierra Nevada's and the Washington and Oregon Cascades.

As a child I began picking at the age of around two, putting more in my stomach than my cup, as was evident by the deep purple around my mouth.

From 1955-1959 my family lived in a Mill shack in Trout Lake Washington. Highway 141 ran right in front of our house and after about 3 miles it became a Forest Service Road which ran into the lowest huckleberry fields and around Peterson Prairie and were the earliest to ripen. Every year mom and us kids would go pick 2-6 gallons of berries and mom would bake a pie for dinner served piping hot from the oven. Then she would freeze some, can some and make jelly out of the rest.



Royal purple fingers of the dedicated huckleberry gatherer

There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother; she will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil in justice and in peace. ~Bourke Coekran

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Pursuing the Wild Olallie, continued

Then the mill owner sold his sawmill and the new owners shut the mill down where daddy worked as night watchman. We were still allowed to rent the old mill house.

Daddy, my uncle and a friend then went to logging and hauling the logs 25 miles into White Salmon, Washington. In 1960 a tree fell on dad and shattered his left arm, breaking it in 6 places and totally destroying his left thumb, he was laid off in a cast for a year.



Huckleberries are one of the first shrubs to re-populate a burnout and a patch such as this one is easy to pick because you don't have to fight upper stories of taller shrubs and bushy trees.

After that he could not work. So he took to finding other work to supplement his government check. Cutting and selling fern, Christmas trees, mistletoe and cones. Then while picking berries he got the idea we could sell the huckleberries as well. He made a sign that read "Huckleberries for Sale \$1.00 per gallon and we went out and picked 7 gallons. By the end of the day we had sold them all and had orders for 6 more gallons from the logging truck drivers who stopped and other folks who were camping. By weeks end we had picked and sold 25 gallons.

This took the family tradition begun by my grandmother on my White side and for centuries of picking on my Native American side into another dimension. After that we not only picked berries for our own use but to sell as well. By 1964 the price per gallon for berries went from \$1.00 per gallon to \$3.00. Then to \$5.00 by 1970 when I had married my husband.

I took my own children berrying every year and we had our special patches and places to pick where we found big sweet lucious berries. I had a CB and because we lived in a logging community many logging trucks would travel the same roads I did to get to the berrys. So I would let them know I was on the roads and the loggers began to look out for me, dubbing me "Huckleberry Honey" which became my CB handle.

I really wonder what gives us the right to wreck this poor planet of ours. ~Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

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Pursuing the Wild Olallie, continued

We picked first for our own use for a week then by August first until school began we would go out 3 days a week and pick 25-30 gallons to sell each day, taking along lunch. We would sing songs which kept the kids picking steady and I gave them incentives when they were younger by telling them the first one to fill a bucket got a dollar etc.

No one was allowed to eat lunch until everyone had thier bucket full. The younger ones had a small cup to fill which as they got older became a small can and up from there. At lunch time we would dump our full buckets into a 5 gallon bucket and go out to pick more. Often my dad was along as well or some friends or other relatives.

It was pleasant picking most the time being out in the woods we would see a lot of wild life and flowers. The next break we would drive to a nearby lake and take a refreshing swim then drive down to Trout Lake when we had 20-25 gallons and sell them to the local store or gas station. By 1985 the price we got was \$10.00 per gallon. I would then take the kids to "Bonnie's Cafe" and buy them each a large soft vanilla ice cream cone. Then we would go home, rest a day and go back out.

In 1988 the price per gallon of berries went from \$12.00 per gallon to \$15.00 per gallon. My teenagers earned enough money to buy their own school clothes, We would make around \$2500 in one month selling the berries and I gave each of my kids \$500 for school clothes, supplies and other things they wanted. The rest I set aside for holiday gifts and events.



In addition to selling to local buisness. We sold to friends, family and neighbors and traded with the Native Americans who lived in the compound across the street from us for salmon.

Around that time in the late 1980's the Latino's and Vietnamese discovered the berries, many did not respect the signs designating areas for Native Americans only. there was more demand from people to buy berries for commercial selling and people began to use mechanical devices like combs and rakes to harvest the sought after fruit.

What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on? ~Henry David Thoreau

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Pursuing the Wild Olallie, continued

People would come from Europe to pick berries or buy them. With commercialism and greed, the Forest Service had to make new regulations for picking berries, limiting folks seeking berries for their own use to three gallons per harvester. They also banned the use of mechanical methods of harvest because the combs and rakes were causing major damage to the bushes and reproduction process for years to come.

Roads were blocked and closed off as well when people began driving into an onto the berries, crushing bushes and to keep many from going into Native American areas.

My family still picks Olallie's today. My kids have grown up and now take their children out to pick huckleberries in and around Mt Spokane area. We moved in 1991 from my home town area of Trout Lake, Washington to Spokane area due to need of schooling and work for my husband. We still find berries, though we have found them harder to find and we have to walk in 3-6 miles to pick them.

This year the youngest child picking was my grandson, age 20 months, he was carried in on mom's back, set down and given a styrofoam cup and we set to picking. He had three berries in his cup and most in his tummy as was evident by the purple ring around his mouth when he grinned. We took some home and put them in the freezer, got some vanilla ice cream and made huckleberry shakes and sold the rest for \$40.00 per gallon. and we will do it again next year and I know when I am no longer able to go out the traditon of picking the wild Olallie has been passed down to the next generation to continue.



Thanks to Jen Donier aka Celanith for this fine story
www.xomba.com/pursuing_the_wild_olallie

*The materials of wealth are in the earth, in the seas, and in their natural and unaided productions.
~Daniel Webster*

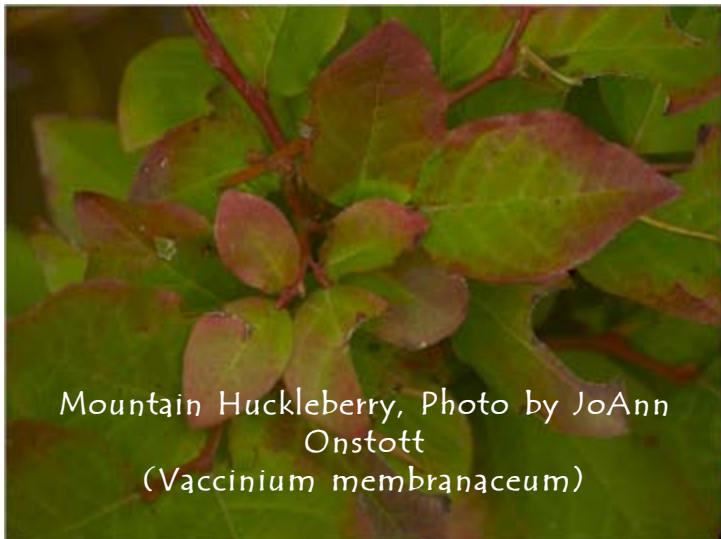


Huckleberry Hounds

By Ellen Horowitz

Sniffing out Montana's delicious purple gem.

By July, many western Montana mountain ranges will be crawling with treasure hunters searching for purple gems. Armed with plastic buckets, coffee cans, or other containers, the prospectors comb hillsides from dawn to dusk. In coffee shops and cafes, they speak in hushed tones of finding "gold mines," "mother lodes," or "bonanzas."



Mountain Huckleberry, Photo by JoAnn Onstott
(*Vaccinium membranaceum*)

All this activity can mean only one thing: Montana's prized wild fruit, the huckleberry, is plentiful and ready to pick.

The Montana huckleberry is closely related to the blueberry, though no self-respecting Montanan would compare the two. Hardcore huckleberry lovers insist their favorite fruit is far superior to the dull, flavorless blueberry, brought under domestication nearly two centuries ago. Plant taxonomists, however, do not consider flavor among important identifying features. Peter Stickney, curator emeritus at the University of Montana Herbarium, studied huckleberries for years and identified seven species in the Treasure State. Montana huckleberry plants range from 2 inches tall with berries the size of match heads to shrubs up to 6 feet tall with pea-sized and larger berries.



"The huckleberries most people seek are found from northwestern Montana down to the mountains outside of Bozeman," says Stickney. These are the globe huckleberry, (*Vaccinium globulare*) and the big huckleberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*), two nearly identical species.

Purple-tongued pickers hoping to cache a few gallons of huckleberries in the deep-freeze care less about taxonomy and more about finding productive patches. The bigger and more abundant the berries, the faster the bucket fills.

Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, then names the streets after them.
~Bill Vaughn, quoted in Jon Winokur, *The Portable Curmudgeon*, 1987

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Huckleberry Hounds, continued

"Northwestern Montana produces the best huckleberry picking in the state," says plant ecologist Maria Mantis, of Whitefish. "It's tough to find any decent huckleberry picking once you leave the Flathead and Kootenai national forests and the Glacier Park area."

Mantis says other national forests in Montana occasionally produce well, but "it's not like mountain ridge after ridge after ridge with big, fat, juicy huckleberries" common to the moister parts of the state's northwestern region. There, festivals in Trout Creek, Whitefish, and Seeley Lake honor the huckleberry each year.

However, just because the huckleberry is northwestern Montana's most abundant plant doesn't mean a person can just drive anywhere and find good picking. "It's like knowing there's fish in every creek," says Mantis. "The challenge is finding the best fishing holes."

Finding hucks

Big and globe huckleberries grow in the mountains at elevations between 3,500 and 7,200 feet. Mantis says to look in forests with roughly 50 percent tree cover—lodgepole pine or mixed forests of lodgepole, larch, spruce, and subalpine fir. Huckleberries grow in 20- to 50-year-old burns, old clear-cuts, ski runs, avalanche chutes, and older, open, high-elevation forests where the plants receive the sunlight they need to thrive.

Like morel mushrooms, hucks grow abundantly in burned areas, but not the year following a fire, as is the case with morels. "Huckleberries come in very slowly after a fire," says Stickney. "It can take 15 to 20 years for the plants to produce prolifically." Likewise, hucks growing in areas opened through logging mature slowly and variably.

Serious huckleberries, like Jim Riley of Columbia Falls, begin searching weeks before the roadside stands hang their "Fresh Hucks For Sale" signs. By mid-July, he's collecting along sunny, south-facing slopes at lower elevations. As the season progresses, he works his way uphill, searching all sides of the mountains. Some years Riley gathers huckleberries well into September.



*For 200 years we've been conquering Nature. Now we're beating it to death.
~Tom McMillan, quoted in Francesca Lyman, The Greenhouse Trap, 1990*

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Huckleberry Hounds, continued

Some of the best picking, Riley says, is “where there’s heavy brush and it’s terribly steep.” Here he often has to do what he calls “one-handed picking.” That’s where the picker has to hang on to the huckleberry bush to prevent tumbling downhill while picking the berries.



Riley says when the berries are abundant and large (3D8 to 1D2 inch in diameter), he can collect a gallon in about an hour. When it’s poor picking and berries are small, however, a single quart per hour may be as good as it gets.

Huckleberries are delicate plants that require adequate sunlight and warmth to fruit abundantly. Depending on elevation and species, huckleberries begin blooming any time between May and July. The small flowers, shaped like Chinese lanterns, vary in color from whitish green to pinkish red. Bees and other insects that pollinate the short-lived blossoms don’t have enough time to get the job done during a cool, cloudy spring. These are the years of low huckleberry production.

The plant’s finicky nature has made it difficult to tame. Researchers in Idaho, who have been trying for years, now hope to have the first commercial huckleberry plants available in about 2010. That thought horrifies Ellen Bryson, a huckleberry enthusiast from Helena who can’t imagine eating a farm-raised huck. “Nothing will ever replace a wild huckleberry,” she insists.

The picking

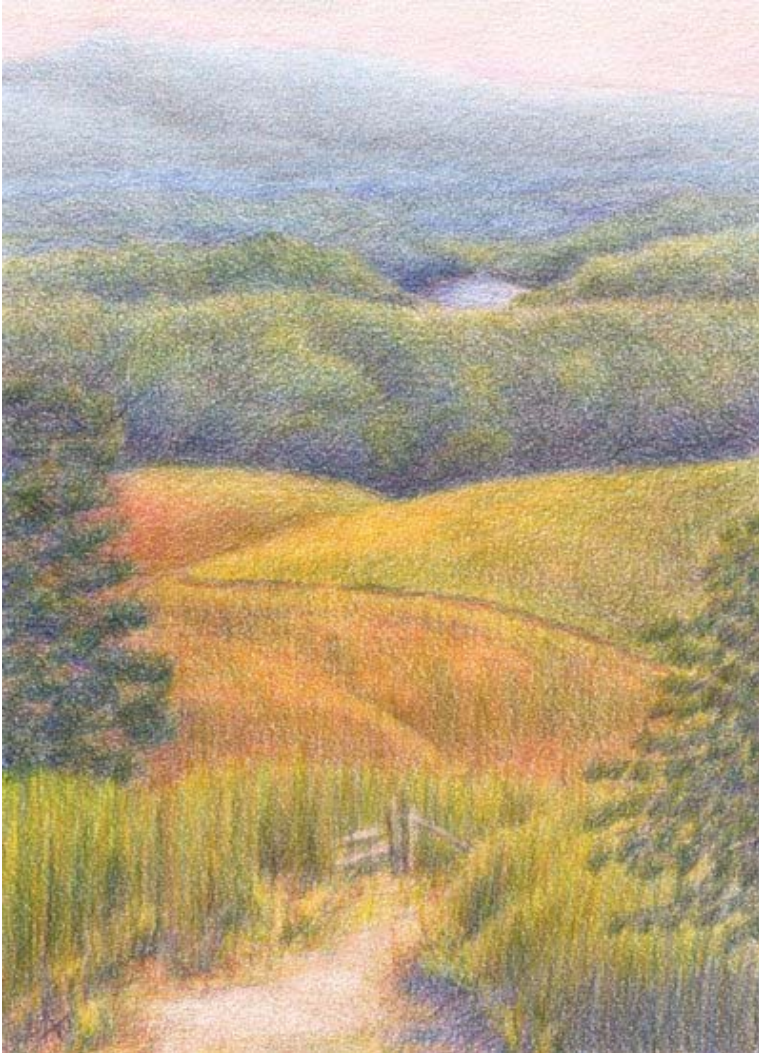
A few things to know before heading out to harvest huckleberries: One, you don’t need a permit to pick hucks in the Flathead National Forest unless you exceed the limit of 10 gallons per person. Other national forests have their own limits, so check first with the particular forest where you plan to pick. Those who sell berries or collect more than their personal limit are considered commercial pickers and must purchase a permit (\$4 per day or \$80 per season). Considering that huckleberries sell for \$30 to \$45 per gallon, most commercial pickers can pay for their permit in no time.

Another thing to remember is that people aren’t the only creatures working huckle-berry patches. Black bears and grizzlies eat them too, so whenever you’re picking in bear country, stay alert and make plenty of noise to reduce the chances of surprising a nearby bear.

Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money. ~Cree Indian Proverb

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Huckleberry Hounds, continued



Once you start picking, you'll notice that huckleberries come in a variety of sizes and colors. Stickney found three color phases to the globe huckleberries: dark red, blue-black or purple-black, and blue-black with a whitish "bloom" or coating similar to that found on plums.

The most likely purple fruit to fool a neophyte berry picker is the serviceberry. Also known as shadeberry and Juneberry, its leaves are rounded and toothed (serrated), and the seeds are large. Serviceberries are edible, but they aren't as scrumptious as hucks.

For many people, picking huckleberries is a tradition as important as Thanksgiving or the elk opener. Bryson heads west to stock up on hucks every summer during the third week of July. "I'm out to get a couple gallons for myself and make desserts and jam to give away," she says. Her ritual includes baking a pie or crisp to share with friends after returning home from the season's first collecting spree. "We absolutely savor that first huckleberry pie," she says. "It just doesn't get any better than that. I absolutely love it and love to get other people going on it, too."

Bryson finds huckleberries by driving into the mountains with the car windows rolled down. Sometimes she sees the purple globes hanging from bushes. Other times she actually smells the hucks first, pulling over to follow her nose into the hills.

To hold picked berries, Bryson uses a plastic container, tightly lidded. "There's nothing worse than watching berries rolling down the slopes," she says, explaining that pickers can expect to stumble a few times while traversing the rugged terrain where huckleberries grow. Bryson wears her quart-sized huckleberry bucket at waist level on a soft rope necklace like an oversized pendant. A U-shaped flap cut in the lid allows her to place berries in the container without removing the top. The flap readily pops back into position to keep berries corralled while both hands remain free for picking.

'Huckleberry Trail'
By Ann Thompson
Nemcosky

And this, our life, exempt from public haunt, finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything. ~William Shakespeare

[⇒More⇒](#)

Huckleberry Hounds, continued

Though some hard-core hunters remove berries from the plant with wooden paddles or rakes, Bryson shuns that technique because too many leaves fall into the bucket." Besides, there's nothing better than sitting in a good patch of berries and picking them by hand," she says.



Sherry Johns of Kalispell grew up huckleberrying with her parents and has passed what she calls a "family passion" down to her own children. She ignores rumors of good or bad berry years, preferring to hike out to favorite spots to see for herself how the hucks are doing. On weekly treks with friends, Johns carries a 1-cup container in her daypack. If she finds huckleberries, she can bring enough home to make a batch of muffins or pancakes. If the berries are abundant, she'll return later with a 4-quart plastic ice cream bucket for some serious collecting.

"My mother used to fix huckleberry syrup and jam, but I've never done that because it takes too many berries," says Johns.

"Having berries in the freezer is like having

money in the bank. You don't want to spend it all." Her goal is to harvest a few gallons each summer, enough for pancakes, pies, and muffins to last the year.

Though books, guides, and articles can provide basic tips on when and where to find hucks, nothing beats experience. You have to get out there and start searching. The more time you spend afield, the better you get at finding huckleberries.

And that means looking on foot. Bryson tells beginners to stop the car once in a while, get out, and look around. "Many berries hide under leaves, so you can't see them from the road," she says. "Once you learn to recognize a huckleberry bush, you'll start to see berries."

She also encourages beginners to keep at it, because the payoff is worth the wait. "There's nothing better than finding that very first patch," she says. "It's heaven. You'll think you've struck gold."



*Ellen Horowitz is a freelance writer in Columbia Falls.
This story is featured in Montana Outdoors
July-August 2004*



Make Your Own Huckleberry Patch

Selecting a Growing Site for Huckleberries

Strive to match your planting site with species that are adapted to the climate and elevation at that location. For example, while *V. deliciosum* and *V. membranaceum* are native to mountain sites, they have been grown near sea level in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Flower and fruit production at sea level sites has tended, however, to be sporadic. Likewise, *V. ovatum* is native to warm, coastal climates and may not perform well at high elevations or on colder sites.

Vaccinium membranaceum, *V. caespitosum*, *V. myrtillus*, and, *V. scoparium* are often productive in lightly to moderately shaded areas that have more available soil moisture than adjacent, drier sites. On moist sites, however, colonies in full sun will often be the most productive. *Vaccinium ovalifolium* is nearly always found in partial shade, while *V. parvifolium* [Note: see more about growing Red Huckleberry in the next article] tolerates somewhat more sun than the other species mentioned in this paragraph. Irrigation may allow you to raise these species in full sun. North- and east-facing slopes are generally preferable to south- and west-facing sites. In excessive shade, however, yields decrease and the amount of sugar deposited in the berries decreases. Huckleberries grown under shade cloth that screens out 50% of sunlight produce berries, but the fruit is usually sour. These six species are typically found on well drained, acidic, sandy loam formed from volcanic ash that holds moisture well. Distinct layers of volcanic ash in the soil are often found associated with these species. Typical bulk densities of native soils are 0.6 to 0.8. Soils on productive wild sites often contain large amounts of rotted wood and surface layers of forest duff. In research field trials at the University of Idaho, *V. membranaceum* and *V. ovalifolium* did not survive well on poorly-drained, silt-loam soils. On sites with heavier soils, plants on raised beds approximately 6 to 12 inches high and 12 to 18 inches wide to improve soil drainage.

Vaccinium deliciosum and *V. uliginosum* are usually found on moist, organic-rich soils alongside ponds, streams, or dry lake bottoms.



Note the new growth on this Oval Leaf Huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovalifolium* [alaskense]) is red.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott

[⇒More⇒](#)

Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

The soils are consistently moist, but not waterlogged or submerged. These species often grow in full sun, although they can also be found alongside heavily shaded streams and drainages. On drier, upland sites, *V. deliciosum* can be found growing with *V. membranaceum* in sandy-loam soils on north-facing slopes or under partial shade.



Oval Leaf Huckleberry
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Huckleberries respond favorably to large amounts of soil organic matter (30% or more), and often root in rotted stumps and logs. To simulate naturally-occurring organic materials, consider amending your soil with peat moss, sawdust, bark, compost, and other organic materials. All of the species discussed here grow well in peat moss-based potting soil. Regardless of the site, provide irrigation. No huckleberries tolerate drought.

Huckleberries are acid-lovers. The optimum soil pH appears to be about 4.0 to 5.5 (7.0 is neutral). In a few cases, *V. membranaceum* has been found on sites with pH values near 7.0. If your soil pH lies between 5.5 and 7.0, consider acidifying the soil before planting by applying agricultural sulfur and regularly fertilizing with an acidifying fertilizer, such as ammonium sulfate. For sites where the pH is 7.0 or above, commercial huckleberry production will be difficult or impossible.

Huckleberry species do not appear to tolerate extreme cold temperatures without snow cover. They should be grown where there is consistently 1

to 2 feet of snow, where winter temps are moderate, or where the plants can be protected when temps drop to 0o F or below.

Avoid planting in a frost pocket. Huckleberries bloom in early spring and the blossoms are susceptible to frost damage. The wood and mature leaves are quite frost tolerant in the spring, although the tips of new shoots can easily be killed by frost. On potentially frosty sites, be prepared to provide frost protection during bloom when temperatures fall below 28o F.

Pest control is a consideration when establishing a huckleberry planting. Huckleberries are prime deer, moose, and elk browse, and you may need a fence to protect your plants.

This fact sheet is contributed by Dr. Danny L. Barney. Dr. Barney is a Professor of Horticulture and Extension Horticulturist specializing in small fruit and ornamental crops, and serves as Superintendent of the University of Idaho Sandpoint Research & Extension Center. www.berrygrape.oregonstate.edu/selecting-a-growing-site-for-huckleberries/



Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

Growing Huge Red Huckleberries (*Vaccinium parvifolium*) At Home

Every once in a while on the edge of the woods you find a lush red huckleberry bush covered with berries the size of large blueberries instead of the tiny berries that are so common. It is so amazing that they get this big without anybody making any effort to cultivate them. There is nothing like the lively and flowery flavor of these berries, and the joy of finding a bush covered with them in the early summer sunshine.

Unfortunately many people think it isn't feasible to grow plump red huckleberries at home. By clearly understanding the nature of where red huckleberries grow best, it is possible to intentionally create similar environments to grow them in.

Besides the beautiful and delicious red berries that add color in the early summer, the leaves on the red huckleberry bush are light yellow in the fall. After the leaves fall off, then you can see an intricate outline of branches that are particularly beautiful with ice or snow on them. As spring approaches the bright red buds on the bright green branches add more color to your yard.

Red huckleberry bushes make a wonderful addition to many different styles of yards.



Nursery grown Red Huckleberry
(*Vaccinium parvifolium*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott



Where They Grow Best in the Wild

In short, red huckleberries grow best on top of tall wide stumps of coniferous trees. Stumps in the full sunlight, that are at least 30 inches across, and a at least 4 feet high, usually have lush red huckleberries growing on them that produce many large berries. The bushes grow okay in shade, but for a thick crop of incredible berries, you need full sunshine from sunrise to sunset.

Red huckleberries are found throughout lowland Puget Sound, and they were a staple food for the Indians. A great meal: fresh smoked salmon with a fresh salad of wild greens and red huckleberries. Actually most of it got mashed up into pemmican, dried, and stored for winter when there wasn't much to eat, and it is cold, dark, and rains all the time.

[⇒More⇒](#)

Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

The red huckleberry can put out a foot of new growth a year, but it takes several years of root development before this can happen. In the wild, the higher stumps keep them above the quick growing shrubs and weeds and in the full sunlight. When in your yard, so as long as you make sure they get enough sunlight, they don't need to be high off the ground.

The Nature of the Stump

There are two critical aspects to the nature of the stump as far as red huckleberries are concerned. The first is that the stump is a huge sponge. Rotten wood can absorb several times its own weight in water. A stump extending many feet above the ground, and with large roots extending many feet below ground, can easily absorb every drop of the 40 inches of rain a year that hits its top and sides. The bark on the lower sides of the stump and roots helps seal in the water and prevent evaporation.



Fall color of Red Huckleberry
(*Vaccinium parvifolium*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

In the larger stumps most of this water won't ever evaporate. This sponge of rotten wood provides a large reservoir of water for the red huckleberry, and carries it through the 3-5 semi-arid summer months the Puget Sound area frequently gets. This is how the red huckleberry survives dry summers even though it isn't drought hardy.

The other critical aspect of the stump is the red huckleberry needs a very acid environment and a rich source of conifer wood based nutrients. Rotting conifer wood provides the perfect fertilizer and growing medium for red huckleberries. Their roots follow the rotting tree roots for great distances. These rotten wet buried roots provide nutrient saturated water for the red huckleberries even in the middle of a summer drought.

You might see a red huckleberry on a large stump of a hardwood tree, but it won't be as big or lush as the ones growing on a conifer stump. They really need the

chemical makeup of rotting conifer wood. Probably rotting Douglas fir wood makes the best medium for red huckleberries.

This tendency of red huckleberry roots to follow the roots of the rotting tree also explains why it's hard to transplant red huckleberries from the wild. It just isn't feasible to dig up 20 feet of a few roots for a 3 foot tall bush. When digging up a wild red huckleberry you frequently end up with 6 branches 3 feet long, and 2 roots 2 feet long, and no root ball. To prevent the bush from drying up and dying the first summer, you would have to cut off almost all the side branches on the red huckleberry, and water it almost constantly. Avoiding this is the big advantage of nursery raised red huckleberries.

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Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

Creating the Huckleberry Mound

Before creating a place to grow red huckleberries, there is one more consideration of stump dynamics to be factored in. The top of the stump is never saturated with water. This means the crown and upper roots of the red huckleberry get to breathe year round. However much of their root tips down deep in the rotten roots are in a saturated airless environment for much of the year. This means that the red huckleberry needs to be planted on a spot that is always hilled up some, probably at least a foot high after the ground settles, so the upper roots always get lots of air.

Conifer sawdust, preferably aged (but this isn't necessary), with a bit of soil mixed in, makes an ideal planting medium for red huckleberries.

For a long time as stumps start to rot, they mostly shrink sideways, so the plants growing on top stay at the same elevation. Sawdust on the other hand can loose half its volume in a few years, and 80% of its original volume in about 10 years. This needs to be taken into account when creating a red huckleberry mound.

You need to start out with enough height so that the huckleberry is still above ground where it can get lots of air in 10 years time. The best way to do this is to mix all of the dirt dug out of the ground with the sawdust so that even when the sawdust is almost completely rotted, there is enough bulk of soil to keep the root crown above the surface of the ground. Due to the lack of oxygen, the sawdust at the bottom of the hole will rot much slower than the sawdust above the surface of the ground, so this will delay the settling of the mound.

Planning the Hole and Soil Mix

As you are working on the red huckleberry mound, just keep remembering that you are creating an artificial stump to recreate the natural environment for the red huckleberry. The closer the mound is in function to a real stump, the better the red huckleberry will grow.

Red Huckleberry flowers. Larger than the blue varieties of hucks, the rosy hips shade to chartreuse green with little pink ruffles.

Photo by JoAnn Onstott



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Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

The deeper you dig the hole, the better the sawdust at the bottom will do at holding water and nutrients for the red huckleberry. The sawdust above the surface will dry out much quicker because of being exposed to airflow and being much more porous than the original stump.

Basically the bigger you dig the hole, the bigger the huckleberry bush will grow. Think of a huckleberry bush on a stump 4 feet wide and 8 feet high. I've seen red huckleberry trunks several inches across on stumps like this. The hole should be at least 2 feet wide at the bottom, about a foot wider at the top, and at least 3 feet deep. The hole needs to be wider at top to provide a wider base for the mound above the surface and so the mix settles more evenly as the sawdust rots.

A combination of sawdust, bark dust, and bark chips is like a natural time release fertilizer, and a three stage sponge. The conifer bark takes much longer to rot than the sawdust, and a while longer than the bark dust. Until it rots some, it won't hold much water, and won't release many nutrients. This will delay the settling of the mound, and provide water absorbing ability and nutrients after the sawdust has mostly rotted.

A good mix for the red huckleberry mound would be:

- 1 part conifer sawdust (not red cedar because it contains natural herbicides until it rots)
- 1 part conifer bark dust or very small bark chips (again, not red cedar)
- 2 parts dirt from the hole

You might get about 20% settling in the first year. If you used garden edging to help keep the mound in place, after it settles and bonds into a solid lump, you will end up with steep sides on the mound. Without the edging, the loose soil mix tends to spread out. As long as there is 2 feet or so of rise to the mound, it doesn't matter how high the mound is, as long as there is a large mass of sawdust, bark, and dirt for the huckleberry to grow on. The edging would be to just help keep the mound contained in more cramped plantings. Starting out with 2 feet of rise helps insure that there will still be a foot of rise after the sawdust has mostly rotted.



Red Huckleberry leaves (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

Adding Compatible Plants to the Huckleberry Mound

You might consider letting the pile spread out a bit because this will quickly become very similar to the duff on the Northwest forest floor. It would be an ideal place to plant native flowering herbaceous plants that normally grow on the forest floor. The red huckleberry would provide partial shade for these plants like they are used to during the summer. And these forest floor plants would get fuller sun in the early spring, before the red huckleberry leafs out, like they are used to in the deciduous areas of the woods.

The First Few Years

Remember, red huckleberries aren't drought tolerant, they just found a niche where they can avoid the summer drought. Until the roots have penetrated the damp cool bottom part of the hole, they will need regular watering. Unless you have dug a really generous hole, and brought in a lot of sawdust and bark to mix with the dirt, they will always need occasional watering during extended dry periods. Be sure to soak them long enough to saturate the whole mound all the way to the bottom. When sawdust completely dries out, it sheds water extremely well and it takes a long time for water to penetrate it.

When building the red huckleberry mound, remember the bigger the hole and the more sawdust you add, the less often it will need watering in the future, and the bigger and juicier your berries will be without any additional effort at all.

This article is by Roger Padvorac, and published at www.skilledwright.com/Essays.htm. For more information, Roger may be contacted at roger@skilledwright.com.



This gardener took advantage of an old stump on the property to create a huckleberry mound following nature's master plan to a T, adding other native plants that find footing in stumps in the wild. What a beautiful result--not only will these plants thrive, the stump provides height and interest. Outstanding!

Photo from blogspot by Cheryl Okai Lindberg.



Your Huckleberry Patch, continued

Blueberries and huckleberries take a lot less effort to grow than most people might think. If the ground isn't properly prepared, however, you may find yourself with a sickly plant that doesn't want to produce any berries.

First, choose a location for the bushes. Keep in mind that high bush blueberries can grow to about 12 feet tall. Another consideration for location is the amount of sunlight the location receives. Blueberries and huckleberries do best with lots of sunshine for most of the day, and a little shade, especially during the hottest part of the day.

Next, dig the holes for the berry bushes. With the dirt that is removed, mix in about half as much finely shredded pine bark or needles, and a small amount of partly broken down high nitrogen fertilizer or mulch. Coffee grounds work well. The pine makes the soil more acidic for these acid loving plants, and the extra nitrogen allows the pine to break down without leaching so much nitrogen out of the soil. Do not use raw manure unless it is going to be several months before you actually plant, since manure can burn the roots.

Once the bushes are in their holes and the soil has been pressed around them firmly, it is a good idea to use mulch around them to retain moisture and keep the roots from drying out too quickly. Weathered straw is a good choice, but bark dust will also work and will continue to add acids to the soil.

When watering the plants, keep in mind that in many areas, the water contains dissolved lime, which will gradually lower the acidity of the soil. In drier areas where rainwater isn't an option, plan on adding more bark dust or pine needles to the soil periodically, testing the soil each time you do. These plants do require a good amount of water, especially after the berries have set.

Mulching the plants twice a year will take care of the fertilizing needs. When done just before winter, this also helps protect the roots from freezes. Compost or mulch also helps retain the water that is in the soil so that the bushes don't need to be watered as often.

Don't expect a large harvest the first year, but if the bushes are maintained and watered well, the number and size of the berries should increase a little each year. If you are growing the blueberries for yourself, though, you'd best invest in netting to cover the bushes, since birds totally love ripe blueberries and huckleberries. (So do the neighbors and people passing by, but I'm afraid that the netting won't do much good for them.)

Blueberry and Huckleberry bushes aren't really hard to grow, they are attractive bushes, and they produce very healthful and tasty berries. What more could you ask in a bush for your garden or borders?

Article by Rex Truelove. Learn more about this author at www.helium.com. He has written hundreds of articles, many of them about gardening.



At Last: Cooking with Hucks!

After the Picking

By Ellen Bryson

Most commercially sold hucks have been cleaned by the vendor, but if you pick them yourself, you'll want to clean them. I put a few cups in a strainer and pick the sticks, leaves, and bugs out by hand. I don't rinse the berries because I can't bear to see the precious juice wash down the drain.

What do you do with the cleaned huckleberries (provided you haven't eaten them all at one sitting)? One option is to freeze them for later use. Hucks must be frozen tightly in a sealed container so the fragrance doesn't permeate everything in your freezer. One way is to freeze the berries in a single layer on a paper towel- covered cookie sheet and then put the frozen berries into a container. Another is to dab the berries gently with a paper towel to remove moisture, put them in a large glass jar or heavy-duty zipper-lock plastic bag, and then freeze. They freeze well this way and are easy to remove later a cup or two at a time.

Try to freeze hucks within a few days of picking. Otherwise they get too juicy, begin to ferment, and freeze into one big huckleberry clump.

I don't wait to thaw huckleberries when baking but simply add them frozen to a pie, cobbler, or pancake recipe. This is one of my favorite recipes, given to me by my picking buddy, Desi Hanson.

Huckleberry Cobbler

1 box butter recipe yellow cake mix
3D4 c. butter
1 c. finely ground pecans
1 c. quick-cooking oatmeal
1 T. cinnamon
11D2 c. fresh or frozen huckleberries

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix first five ingredients until crumbly. Put half the mixture in the bottom of a 13- by 9-inch baking pan (sprayed with cooking oil) and pat down. Distribute huckleberries over bottom layer. Sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over the top and pat lightly. Bake 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.



From <http://fwp.mt.gov/mtoutdoors>

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At Last: Cooking with Hucks!, continued

Huckleberry Buckle II

Submitted by: Roni Photo by: SaresMama

"This is a family recipe from my husband's mom and grandma. I like it better than the traditional cobbler. This works well with blueberries and blackberries also!"

Prep Time: 10 Min
Cook Time: 45 Min
Ready In: 1 Hr

- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cups huckleberries
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 tablespoon butter



1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C.) Grease the bottom of a 9 inch square pan.
2. In a large bowl, cream 1/4 cup butter and 1/2 cup sugar. In a separate small bowl, combine flour, baking powder and salt. Stir into butter mixture. Stir in milk; mixture will be thick and lumpy. Spread batter into the prepared pan.
3. In a large bowl, combine berries, 3/4 cup sugar and 1/2 cup boiling water. Pour over the batter in the pan. Dot the top with remaining 1 tablespoon of butter.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 45 to 50 minutes.

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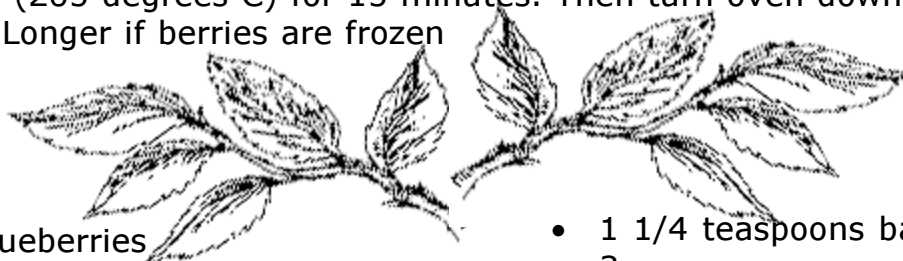
At Last: Cooking with Hucks!, continued

Auntie's Wild Huckleberry Pie

Submitted by: Nancy Sabatino

"This is a good huckleberry pie and it isn't quite as sweet as some. Use fresh or frozen huckleberries."

- 1 recipe pastry for a 9 inch double crust pie
 - 4 cups huckleberries
 - 2 1/2 tablespoons tapioca
 - 2/3 cup white sugar
 - 1/4 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
 - 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon butter
1. Mix together the huckleberries, tapioca, sugar, salt, brown sugar, and apple cider vinegar.
 2. Pour mixture into unbaked pie shell. Dot top with butter. Add top pastry and flute edges.
 3. Bake at 400 degrees F (205 degrees C) for 15 minutes. Then turn oven down to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 45-55 minutes. Longer if berries are frozen



Huckleberry Fritters

- 2 c huckleberries or blueberries
- 3 c unbleached flour
- 1/2 c granulated sugar
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 c water
- Oil (for deep frying)

Wash berries and allow to drain well. Sift dry ingredients together into a mixing bowl. Beat eggs with water until foamy. Mix quickly into dry ingredients. Fold in berries.

Heat oil or shortening in deep heavy skillet to 350 degrees F.

Drop batter by tablespoonsful into the hot oil. Turn fritters frequently so that they brown to a deep golden color on all sides. Drain on paper towels and serve hot. Makes 2 dozen.

From Gingrich Farms in Canby, Oregon

www.recipegoldmine.com

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At Last: Cooking with Hucks!, continued

Lemon-Poppy Polenta Cookie and Huckleberry Gelato Sandwiches

Adapted from a recipe by Mary Ellen Carroll and Donna Wingate

Because Carroll and Wingate happened to find plump huckleberries right before the ICA dinner, they decided to make sorbet and turn their lemon-poppy polenta cookies into whimsical sandwiches. Any tart store-bought sorbet (like raspberry, blood orange or lemon) would be delicious with these cookies as well. Makes 16 sandwiches. Both cookie and gelato are made at least 2 hours ahead of serving.

Cookie Ingredients

- 1 cup instant polenta
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2/3 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 3 tablespoons solid vegetable shortening, at room temperature
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon poppy seeds

Directions

1. In a food processor, combine the polenta, 3/4 cup of flour, confectioners' sugar, baking powder and salt and pulse to blend. Add the butter, shortening and lemon zest and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse sand. Add the egg and poppy seeds and pulse just until the dough forms a ball. Pat the dough into a disk and wrap in plastic; refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or until firm.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°. Generously flour a work surface and rolling pin. Roll out the dough 1/8 inch thick. Using a floured 2 1/4-inch round biscuit cutter, stamp out 28 cookies as close together as possible. Gather the dough scraps together and gently reroll the dough, then stamp out 4 more cookies. Carefully transfer the cookies to 2 ungreased baking sheets.



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At Last: Cooking with Hucks!, continued

3. Bake the cookies on the upper and lower racks of the oven for 18 minutes, or until golden; shift the pans from top to bottom and front to back halfway through baking to ensure even browning. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets.

The cookies can be made up to 3 days ahead. Let cool completely, then store in an airtight container.

Gelato Ingredients

- 10-12 oz. bag of frozen, unsweetened raspberries, fully thawed
- 1/3 cup sugar, or more to taste
- 1/2 cup heavy cream

Place all the ingredients in a blender (or a food processor). Blend until very smooth. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a 2-cup measuring cup, and chill until cold. Freeze in your ice cream maker. Pop the gelato in the freezer for a couple of hours to firm up.

To form the sandwiches, scoop about 1/4 cup of the softened sorbet onto each of 16 cookies. Top the sorbet with the remaining cookies, pressing lightly to help evenly spread the sorbet. Set the sandwiches on a baking sheet and freeze for about 1 hour, or until the sorbet is firm.

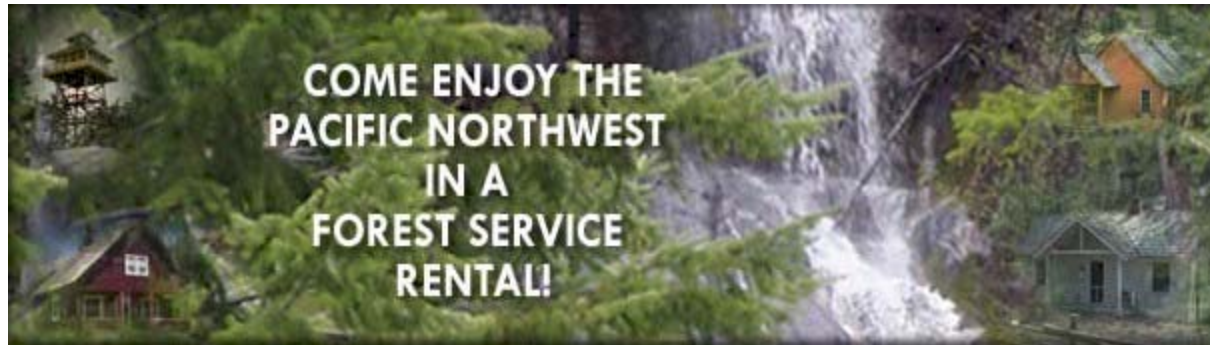
www.foodandwine.com



Huckleberries can be used in all the ways regular blueberries are used. Jams, jellies, muffins, pancakes, syrup, etc. If you were to do a taste test comparing these native hucks with store-boughten blueberries, the first difference you would notice is how much more flavorful the wild fruits are. Whether you hunt them down in the wild or grow them in your own garden, northwest native huckleberries will soon become your favorite fruit. Because of this danger, take a hint from our master gardener: plant twice as many as you think you'll need!



Old tyme vacations



Big changes have occurred in most of our lives here in the US, especially in the last year or so. It is likely that some of these changes have an impact on our leisure time activities. If you are ready for an unusual vacation, you may find taking a step back to the last century to be fascinating, relaxing and relatively economical.

You'll see native plants growing right where they were when the first explorers and pioneers found them. As you are visiting wildlife territories, you will surely cross paths with birds not commonly seen in cities and towns. Chipmunks and foxes, rabbits and frogs, give opportunities to learn about our world.

Enjoy a very different time by staying in a ranger station or fire lookout offered for rental by the Forest Service Rental Program! Here's an excerpt from their website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/recreation/rentals/index.shtml:



"Whether it is winter, spring, summer, or fall, you can experience all of the seasons in a historic Forest Service cabin or fire lookout. Once operated as fully staffed lookouts or remote ranger stations, many of these rentals provide an opportunity to live the life of a ranger or fire lookout."

"These recreation rentals are offered to the public under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Rental fees are retained locally to help maintain and preserve these historic properties."

*"... do something. Pay your rent for the privilege of living on this beautiful, blue-green, living Earth."
~Dave Foreman*

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Old tyme vacations, continued

A Bit of History

Many of the cabins and lookouts that compose the Recreation Lodging offering in the Pacific Northwest Region are the historic representatives of a once- extensive system of protective structures designed to detect wildfires – and to house fire guards, “smoke chasers,” who formed the front-line defense in fighting those fires as the initial attack.

The cabins were “Guard Stations” – intermediate protective facilities between the Ranger Station and the back country. Guard Stations were strategically located, to afford the maximum contact with people headed into the back country– to check permits, provide information, and caution about the use of fire. Guard Stations also placed fire guards closer to forest so that no time would be lost in getting on the trail when a phone call came in from the lookout locating a “smoke” (fire). Many of the trails that are now recreation trails began as fire trails to connect and supply fire lookouts, and to reach far into the back country.



Fire lookouts were fixed point fire detection stations, built from a sequence of standard plans, the designs for which were technical and functional. At first, fire lookouts were located on high peaks such as Mt Hood and Mt Adams, and in the fore country. However, the high peaks were often above the clouds and didn't provide a routinely good view of the surrounding forested lands. Access to the back country was gradually increased, and after its formation in 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built many lookouts, both ground houses and towers, in areas of the forests not previously covered. At its zenith, the fixed point fire detection system covered virtually every stream drainage, often from two or three points, so that almost all forested lands were visible. More recently, other fire detection technologies have largely supplanted fixed point fire detection stations.

Man must feel the earth to know himself and recognize his values.... God made life simple. It is man who complicates it. ~Charles A. Lindbergh

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Old tyme vacations, continued

General Information

Pets: Pets are allowed in many of the recreation rentals available to the public. Here are a few simple things to consider when bringing your family member on your trip to make your stay more enjoyable to you, your pet, other visitors, and wildlife:

1. Keep your pet leashed when required. Some rentals require that your pet remain outside and leashed.
2. Prevent your pet from harassing or chasing wildlife. Many animals maintain a small margin of energy reserves particularly in the winter for their survival.
3. Clean up after your pet.
4. Do not leave your pet unattended in the rental.

Storms: Storms are part of the thrill of staying at a lookout, but they are also extremely dangerous. If a lightning storm should occur while you are at the lookout, please follow these rules:

1. Stay indoors or in your car.
2. If you are trapped outside during a lightning storm, move to lower ground and stay low to the ground.
3. Do not stand under trees or other high objects.
4. If you are in the lookout building, close windows and doors. Lightning follows air currents.
5. Turn off radios. Do not touch anything metal.

Safety: Many of the fire lookouts are difficult to access requiring the ability to scale ladders or climb steep steps. Catwalks around the towers are narrow. Modifications to these facilities are virtually impossible in order to maintain their historic integrity. These lookouts are not recommended for small children.

Rental photos: On the next few pages are photos of some of the cabins. Get the details at their website address shown at the end of this article.



*Till now man has been up against Nature; from now on he will be up against his own nature.
~Dennis Gabor, Inventing the Future, 1963*

[⇒More⇒](#)

Old tyme vacations, continued

Malheur Nat'l Forest: Fall Mt Lookout



Malheur Nat'l Forest: Murder's Creek Work Center



Mt Baker-Snoqualmie Nat'l Forest: Evergreen Mt Lookout



Mt Baker-Snoqualmie Nat'l Forest: Suiattle Guard Station



Mt Hood Nat'l Forest: Clackamas Lake Historic Ranger Cabin



Mt Hood Nat'l Forest: Clear Lake Lookout



Mt Hood Nat'l Forest: Fivemile Butte Lookout



Fremont-Winema Nat'l Forests: Aspen Cabin



Ochoco Nat'l Forest: Cold Springs Guard Station Cabin



Okanogan & Wenatchee Nat'l Forests: American River Guard Station



Okanogan & Wenatchee Nat'l Forests: American Ridge Lodge



Okanogan & Wenatchee Nat'l Forests: Cottonwood Cabin



Okanogan & Wenatchee Nat'l Forests: Table Mountain A-Frame



Okanogan & Wenatchee Nat'l Forests: Teanaway Guard Station



Olympic Nat'l Forest: Hamma Hamma Cabin



[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Old tyme vacations, continued

**Olympic Nat'l
Forest:
Interrorem Cabin**



**Olympic Nat'l
Forest: Louella
Cabin**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Bald
Knob Lookout**



**Rogue River-Siskiyou
Nat'l Forest: Bolan Mt
Lookout**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Imnaha
Guard Station**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Lake of the
Woods Lookout**



**Rogue River-Siskiyou
Nat'l Forest: Ludlum
House Group Site**



**Rogue River-Siskiyou
Nat'l Forest: Onion
Mountain Lookout**



**Rogue River-Siskiyou
Nat'l Forest: Packer's
Cabin**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Quail
Prairie Lookout**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Snow
Camp Lookout**



**Rogue River-
Siskiyou Nat'l
Forest: Willow
Prairie Cabin**



**Umatilla Nat'l
Forest:
Clearwater Big
House Cabin**



**Umatilla Nat'l
Forest:
Clearwater
Lookout Cabin**



**Umatilla Nat'l
Forest: Ditch Creek
Guard Station**



[➡ More ➡](#)

Old tyme vacations, continued

**Fremont-Winema
Nat'l Forests:
Hager Mt Lookout**



**Gifford Pinchot Nat'l
Forest: Govmt Mineral
Springs Guard Station**



**Gifford Pinchot Nat'l
Forest: Peterson
Prairie Guard Station**



**Malheur Nat'l
Forest: Deer Creek
Guard Station**



**Willamette Nat'l
Forest: Timpanogas
Shelter**



FEATURED RENTALS



Want remote?

Currier Guard Station reflects the days of the remote guard station.

Visit the Fremont-Winema National Forests and saddle up!

Want a view?

Summit Guard Station or Wenatchee Guard Station are both on the edge of the world with views that cannot be duplicated in a photograph, all you can do is sit back and enjoy.

Check out the Umatilla National Forest for these rentals!

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. ~Chief Seattle, 1855

[⇒More⇒](#)

Old tyme vacations, continued

Once you find a site that interests you, go to the Recreation Rental web page for that site to see all the details. We chose the Umpqua National Forest Whisky Camp Guard Station as an example.

Umpqua National Forest Whisky Camp Guard Station



Open year round.

Facility Rates*

Nightly/Daily Rates

Peak Season

Thu Jan 01 2009-

Thu Dec 31 2009

CABIN NONELECTRIC

\$40.00



*Displayed rates do not reflect discounts, fees, taxes or incremental charges

**Weekly rates may not be available for all sites

Description:

Experience the life of a Forest Service Fire Guard before the days of roads and aerial fire detection. Whisky Camp was the summer home of a fireguard whose primary duties were smoke chaser firefighter, relief lookout, phone line and trail maintenance, fire patrol and prevention. A forest of incense cedar, pine and fir trees surrounds Whisky Camp. This two room cabin is equipped with one double bed and two single beds. Amenities include a heater, lanterns, cooking stove with oven and a refrigerator powered by propane, which is provided. A vault toilet is located at the site. There is a metal outdoor fire ring and barbeque for cooking and a campfire. There is no water at the site, so bring as much as you will need for drinking, cooking and washing. Potable water is available at a spigot in front of the Tiller Ranger Station office.

*Take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but footprints. Kill nothing but time.
~Motto of the Baltimore Grotto, a caving society*

⇒ [More](#) ⇒

Old tyme vacations, continued

Services & Amenities Within Facility

- Bbq Grills
- Beds & Foam Pads
- Biking
- Bird Watching
- Broom & Dust Pan
- Hiking
- Hiking Trail
- Historic Sites
- Horse Trail
- Horseback Riding
- Mattress
- Mountain Biking
- Parking
- Photography
- Picnic Tables
- Propane & Cooking Stove
- Propane Lights
- Sightseeing
- Table & Chairs
- Vault Toilet
- Wildlife Viewing

Alerts and Important Information

Whisky Camp Guard Station is at 3800 feet elevation and does receive snow. The roads to the cabin are not plowed. You may have to snow shoe, cross- country ski or snowmobile up to five miles to reach the cabin. A four wheel drive vehicle is recommended in the winter months. Please call the Tiller Ranger District at 541-825-3100 for current conditions.



The combination to the gate and cabin will be provided by "Recreation.gov" in your confirmation letter. The combination lock on the door has five black vertical buttons. The top button is number one and the bottom button is number five. Press each button firmly to set the combination. You must have the combination prior to your stay.

Squirrels, rats, mice and bears all love a messy house. Please keep the building and grounds clean to deter these unwanted visitors. Dogs are allowed at the camp provided the owner picks up after them. If you let dogs wander free they could endanger wildlife and plants.

When you leave, please make sure the fire is out. Please sweep the floor. Check the area for litter and pack out all trash. Trash bags can be dumped at the transfer site on County Rd 46 at milepost 4.5. The transfer site is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10AM to 6PM. You will need to show your confirmation letter at this site. There is also a dumpster at the Ranger Station.

Make sure you have taken everything you brought and left everything that was there when you came.

After a visit to the beach, it's hard to believe that we live in a material world. ~Pam Shaw

⇒More⇒

Old tyme vacations, continued

Did you lock the doors and windows? Did you lock the gate? No potable water. No campfires during high fire danger when public use restrictions are in effect.



Be aware that the code of federal regulations prohibits on national forest lands, discharging a firearm in or within 150 yards of a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site or occupied area, (36CFR 261.10d). It also prohibits digging, excavating, disturbing, destroying or in any way damaging historic property (36 CFR 261.9g). These regulations are not just common sense, they will enable us to preserve these rentals for generations to come.



Please call the Tiller Ranger District at (541)825-3100 at least 4 days prior to your arrival at the Lookout to confirm the combination.

Forest Service Recreation Rental Web Page



Want to reserve a cabin or lookout?

All reservations are through the Recreation.gov website.

Visit them at www.RECREATION.gov or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

USDA Forest Service - Pacific Northwest Region

Last Modified: Thursday, 26 March 2009 at 14:59:43 EDT

This & That

Notes from Jennifer

Earth Day came and went last week. Last year, as in every year since 1969 or 1970 there were events to celebrate this important day when we hear phrases like “endangered species” and “environmental impact” and “global warming” and “solar energy” and “sustainability” and the same was true of 2009 Earth Day. But there were some differences I consider encouraging.

Last year I asked the person in charge of such things at the place where I work if it might not be a positive thing to sponsor an event for employees and for our customers. I did not get a response but this year an event suddenly materialized.

The doings everywhere have been growing stronger and more elaborate each time. Ordinary people are learning how to better their recycling skills and why it is important to take our own bags when we go shopping how much money can be saved by using compact fluorescent bulbs.

Many magazines now have Earth Day issues and some have regular green columns in each issue. Redecorating publications often give ways and suggest products that allow a greener outcome to projects.

This is extremely encouraging to me. Oddly, the current economic standard is walking hand in hand with the green movement and for good reason: a green lifestyle is far less expensive than blatant consumerism.


Nowhere does this prove true more exactly than in the garden. Poisoning weeds costs money, endangers humans and wildlife and harmful chemicals pollute the land and eventually stink up our oceans. However, pulling weeds gets us outdoors for fresh air, makes us stronger because it is great exercise, and when we compost those weeds they turn into golden soil improvement--all for free.

Using native plants instead of aliens is beneficial because although they may cost as much as the aliens, their survival rate is vastly better, their care is far less work and they do not crowd out our native land the way aliens are prone to doing. And the natives are simply beautiful.



Earth Day
Art from
children
around the
world.





*There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more.
~George Gordon, Lord Byron, Childe Harold's
Pilgrimage*

Sword Fern in snow
(*Polystichum munitum*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Useful Plant Databases on the Web

Here is a good collection of web data bases that will be useful to professional growers and all native plant gardeners. This list is from a larger list compiled by Lawyer Nursery in 2002 and published in one of their flyers. I wish to thank them for this public service.

Wally

American Bonsai Society

http://www.absbonsai.org/abs_home.html

Birdchick

<http://www.birdchick.com/>

Hundreds of photos of birds, bees, butterflies and other friendlies. Sharon Stiteler shares the joys of birding as well as insights on rabbits.

Bonsai web

<http://www.bonsaiweb.com>

Portal of links to educate about the art of bonsai.

CalPhotos

<http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/photos/>

Over 33,000 plant images from the University of California, Berkley

Cornell University online grafting course

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/hort494/graftage/hort494.index.html>

Fire effects on plant species

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/>

USDA, Forest Service site.



*Oh Beautiful for smoggy skies,
Insecticided grain,
For strip-mined mountain's majesty
Above the asphalt plain.
America, America,
Man sheds his waste on thee,
And hides the pines with billboard signs,
From sea to oily sea.
~George Carlin*

⇒ **More** ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, Continued

Flora of North America Web Site

<http://hua.huh.harvard.edu/FNA/>

Taxonomic relationships, distributions, and morphological characteristics of all plants native and naturalized found in North America.

Forest Types of the United States

<http://forestry.about.com/library/tree/bltypdex.htm>

Maps of the most common forest types.

Forestry index

<http://forestryindex.net/>

Links to news & info on the forestry industry.

Growit.com Rooting Database

<http://www.growit.com/Know/Rooting.htm>

"Extensive information on rooting cuttings of woody plants, organized by botanical name. Developed for commercial growers."

ModernBackyard

<http://www.modernbackyard.com>

Landscape architecture provides exceptional, affordable landscape design online.

The Native Plant Network

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/>

Information on how to propagate native plants of North America.



*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings.
Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine
flows into trees. The winds will blow their own
freshness into you, and the storms their energy,
while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.
~John Muir*

⇒ **More** ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, Continued

Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

<http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=29323>

Oregon's Clean River Agency website full of wonderful information about caring for our earth. Download their Native Plant Poster, plant list and brochure on removing invasive plants at

River Corridor and Wetland Restoration

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site

Soils

<http://homepages.which.net/~fred.moor/soil/links/10102.htm>

A website about soil fertility, chemistry, and pH with many interesting links.

Soil Science Society of America

<http://www.soils.org/>

Website for soil science professionals. Offers information and links.

Woody Plant Seed Manual

<http://www.wpsm.net/>

Manual by the US Forest Service covering seed biology, genetic improvement of forest trees, seed testing, certification of tree seeds and other woody plant materials, and nursery practices.



*Humanity is on the march,
Earth itself is left behind.
~David Ehrenfeld,
The Arrogance of Humanism,
1978*

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the Willamette Valley.

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Red Huckleberry Fall Color

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FAX 503-549-8739

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www.nwplants.com

**Red Huckleberry Fruit
(*Vaccinium parvifolium*)**

Photo by JoAnn Onstott



Wallace W Hansen Native Plants of the Northwest

Red Huckleberry Flowers (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)

Photo by JoAnn Onstott

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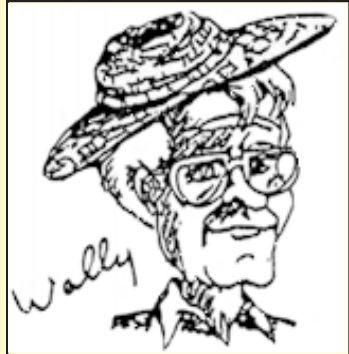
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**Over 200 Species Available Year-Round Including Wetland & Restoration Plants
A UNIQUE RESOURCE OF NATIVE PLANTS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

I offer a unique resource—probably the largest collection of native plants in one location in the NW. Over 200 species in containers are available 12 months of the year, plus Bare-Root and “Balled & Burlapped” plants in the Fall & Winter. You can create a wonderful native plant garden on a small city lot or on a larger acreage. Use natives for specimen and demonstration gardens in parks and around schools and large buildings. Natives are tough, often drought resistant—this is their home—they love it here! Many have delicious fruit – many attract wildlife – animals, birds, and butterflies.

A NURSERY TRIP – WELL WORTHWHILE!

This delightful, peaceful Native Plant Nursery/Garden is located about five miles east of Salem, Oregon, on five acres of Doug Firs, Cedar, Pine, and ancient Garry Oaks. This central Willamette Valley location is an easy drive from anywhere in the NW. If you are interested in Natives, a tour of the Nursery/Gardens is well worthwhile (improve your plant identification skills). My nursery and gardens have often been referred to as an “Arboretum” of plants of the Pacific Northwest. You will be inspired and encouraged in your own gardening.

- VISA, MASTERCARD, CHECK ACCEPTED
- UPS SHIPPING
- PHONE & MAIL ORDERS OKAY

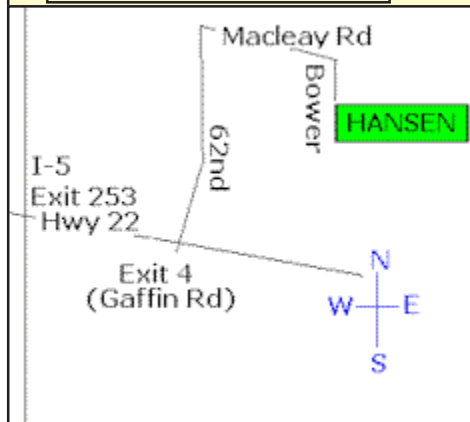
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**E-mail: plants@nwplants.com
Website: www.nwplants.com**



To drive to my Nursery
From I-5, take Exit 253 (Hwy 22). Drive east on Hwy 22 approx. 3 miles to Exit 4 (Gaffin Rd). Follow this exit to the 2nd stop sign. Turn right onto Macleay Rd. Drive 1/2 mile to Bower Ct. Go right on Bower to end—turn left into Nursery.

**SEE WEB SITE FOR
DAYS & HOURS OPEN**