



## Common shrubs shrub-steppe habitats

Photos (unless noted) by Susan Ballinger

Sources for text include:

<http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection.php>

*Flora of the Pacific Northwest* by C. Leo Hitchcock & Arthur Cronquist  
*Plants of Southern Interior British Columbia and the Inland Northwest* by  
Roberta Parish, Ray Coupe, and Dennis Lloyd

Fall, 2012

# *Artemisia tridentata* big sagebrush

# ASTER Family

**Habitat:** widespread and common in deep soiled (>12 in.) shrub-steppe up to 7 feet tall

Prior fall's flowering stalks.

**Leaves:** wedge-shaped, most with 3 toothed-tip. Dense gray hair on both sides. **Most leaves persist through winter.**



Yellow in photo are long thin leaves, that dry up & die in summer. Smaller hairy, thick leaves remain year-round



**Flowers:** small, yellow, born in composite heads of 3-5 disk flowers. Very small.

Evergreen aromatic shrub. Grayish shredding bark on older branches.

Flowers in fall. Does not resprout after wildfire but regenerates from seed.

# *Artemisia tripartita* three-tip sagebrush

**Habitat:** Generally smaller shrub than big sagebrush, growing in slightly moister areas. **2-4 ft. tall**

Flowers in fall, evergreen  
1-2 feet tall. Vigorous sprouter after wildfire.

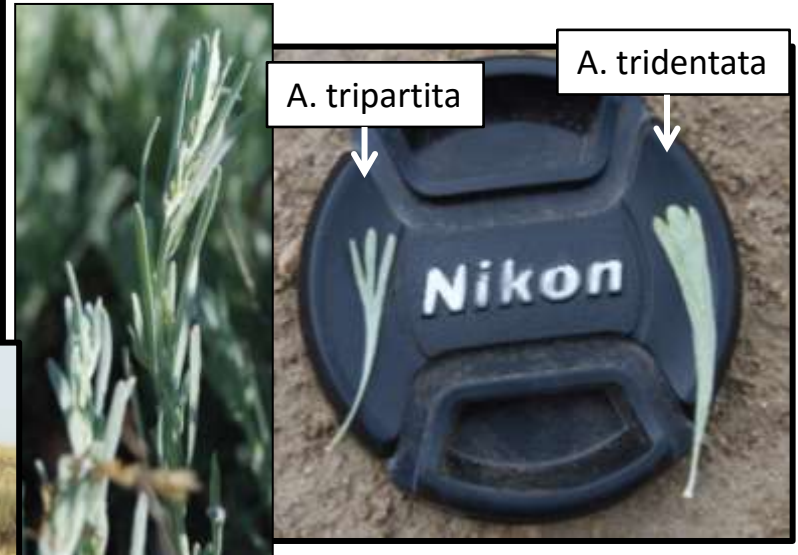


Flower buds appear brown



# ASTER Family

**Leaves:** deeply cleft into narrow linear divisions, which may themselves be 3-cleft



*A. tripartita*

*A. tridentata*



# *Artemesia rigida* rigid sagebrush

ASTER Family

habitat: dry, rocky, thin soils in shrub-steppe. Less than 2 feet tall

Small, often spreading outward on ground.  
Older bark is very black.



Flowers in fall

**Leaves:** 1-4 cm. long, narrow, deeply divided into 3-5 narrow segments. All **deciduous** leaves



**Flowers:** heads or clusters of heads sessile in the axils, surrounded by longer leaves. Inconspicuous & hard to see.



## *Purshia tridentata* bitterbrush

ROSE Family

**Habitat:** in hot dry environments. Most abundant on sandy soils up to 4,000 feet.

Usually killed by Summer & Fall wildfires, but some can sprout after being burned in a light spring fire

2-6 feet tall.



**Leaves:** Deciduous, alternate. Wedge-shaped with 3-toothed tip. Hairy to wooly. Silver-green on upper leaf, grey-wooly below. Commonly, edges rolled under

**Flowers:** Bright yellow & numerous. Funnel-shaped. Solitary on short, leafy branches. 5 petals.



**Fruits:** Seeds are pyramid-shaped. Small rodents cache seeds for later food use.



**Stems:** Rigidly branched with grey or brown bark and twigs covered in dense hairs.



***Ericameria* (formerly *Chrysothamnus*) *nauseosus* rubber rabbit brush ASTER Family**

**Habitat:** widespread & common in shrub-steppe, especially in sandy soils, & low-elevation dry forests.  
**up to 3-4 feet tall**

ID tip: If you scrape any stem, a brighter green shows, distinguishing it from the similar species, green rabbitbrush, *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*.

**Leaves:**  
long,  
narrow, &  
linear.  
Stems &  
leaves  
covered  
with dense  
gray velvety  
hairs on  
both sides.



Fall blooming      deciduous  
Re-sprouts vigorously after wildfire



**Flowers:** small, yellow, born in small composite heads of 5 disk flowers at branch tips. Blooms in late summer.

# Amelanchier alnifolia serviceberry (Saskatoon)

# ROSE Family

**Habitat:** In moister shrub-steppe gullies and ravines and at edge of talus slopes, up to dry open forests and rocky sites from low to subalpine elevations. **Up to 30 feet tall**

## Leaves:

Deciduous, thin, round to oval, and toothed above the middle. Finely hairy on underside



**Flowers:** 5 petals, white, showy, linear to oblong petals. In short leafy clusters of 3-20 flowers at branch tips

**Stems:** Smooth with bark grey to red. Spreads with underground stems forming dense colony



**Fruits:** purple to nearly black, apple-like, with a whitish film (glaucous).



# *Ribes cereum* wax current (older name, squaw current) CURRANT Family

**Habitat:** lowest zone of dry forest in open, hot, & rocky sites.

**Up to 6 feet tall**



**Stems:** new branches finely hairy, becoming gray-brown with age

Very branched, no prickles (un-armed) deciduous.



**Fruits:** small red berries

**Leaves:** numerous & small, fan-shaped, weakly 3-5 lobe. Sparsely hairy and often glandular on both sides. At branch tips



**Flowers:** green-white to pink, urn-shaped. In clusters of 2-8 hanging on a drooping stalk. All are sticky & finely hairy



# *Ribes aureum* golden current

# CURRENT Family

**Habitat:** shrub-steppe floodplains of rivers & streams, talus slopes.  
**Up to 10 feet tall**

Deciduous rounded shrub



**Flowers:** 5 golden-yellow petals fused into a tube, fragrant  
Early spring bloomer.



**Branches:** multi-stemmed, reddish when young, turning dark gray



**Leaves:** alternate, bright green, 3-lobed, somewhat leathery

**Fruits:** orange, round berry

# *Prunus virginiana* Chokecherry

ROSE family

**Habitat:** along watercourses in grasslands, & shrub-steppe. In open low elevation forests, often in exposed dry sites & in rocky outcrops. **Up to 13 feet tall.**



**Flowers:** small, white, saucer-shaped, 5 rounded petals; in long clusters at branch tips, pendulous



**Fruits** shiny, red to purple to black  
In hanging clusters.

Deciduous, straggly shrub, trunks crooked, smooth bark (red to gray brown) without horizontal lenticels



**Leaves:** Alternate, thin, broadly oval, finely sharp-toothed, sharp-pointed tip, dull green above, paler below.

