Native Plant of the Month

Indian-plum

Also called Osoberry

Oemleria cerasiformis

• Indian-plum is the first native shrub to flower in our forest, and its blooming tells us to celebrate the coming of spring.
• “Oso” means bear in Spanish. The berries are a favorite food for bears, foxes, coyotes, and deer.
• Birds such as cedar waxwings and robins also quickly devour the berries.
• Indian-plum’s early spring blooms help to feed Anna’s hummingbirds after a long winter.
• The buds, flowers, and leaves smell like cucumbers when lightly crushed.

Landscape Value

Indian-plum is an excellent shrub for the forest edge and understory with enchanting clusters of white flowers. These soon produce orange berries which turn a deep purple.

By midsummer this plant blends into obscurity as a light-green foliage plant, eventually turning yellow with leaf drop in early fall.

This plant is most attractive grown in groups along sunny to partly shady forest edges with vine maple, oceanspray, red flowering currant, evergreen huckleberry, serviceberry, and Oregon grape for year-round interest.

Text by Heidi Bohan
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