Native Plant of the Month

Kinnikinnick
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

• The common name “kinnikinnick” is taken from a native word for an herbal blend which was burned in ceremony. This plant was one of several plants that were used in this mixture and was given this name.
• The berries (uva is Latin for grape) last through the winter and are used by many animals including bears (Latin: ursa) as described in its scientific name.
• The berries are also edible for humans, though dry and not pleasantly favored, but good to know about as a trail snack or survival food.

Landscape Value

Kinnikinnick is a premier landscape plant used widely as an evergreen groundcover. It is commonly used in commercial plantings such as parking lots and industrial areas because of its toughness, once established.

This plant thrives in sunny, well-drained areas, and is especially useful on slopes, islands, and sidewalk strips.

It spreads by runners, though easily maintained, and can make an attractive cascading form on rockery.

Plant en masse or mixed with other sun-loving northwest natives such as wax myrtle, penstemon, Pacific silverweed, oceanspray, Oregon grape, silk tassel bush, ground juniper, and garry oak.

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