
Pacific Ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*)

Rose Family

Why Choose It?

This shrub charms in all four seasons. Spring brings its glossy maple-like leaves and flowers in snowy puffs. Summer sees the flower heads turn to papery red fruits with yellow seeds. Fall touches the leaves with rosy-brown. And in winter the bare branches show off shredding, bronze-colored bark.



Photo: Rod Gilbert

In the Garden

Tolerant of sun or shade, so-so soil, and wet to dry sites, Pacific Ninebark will help fill out a hedgerow, stabilize a bank, or perk up a mixed border. It forms thickets that shelter birds. Butterflies and their larvae both find it inviting.

The Facts

Pacific Ninebark is a deciduous shrub that grows 10 to 15 feet tall. Overall shape can be upright or spreading, depending on how you prune the arching branches. Especially in a dry, sunny site, water it well for the first two growing seasons.

Where to See It

Pacific Ninebark grows mostly at low elevations — in open forests, along creeks, and in damp shrubby places, often with thimbleberry, salmonberry, or red-osier dogwood. It is primarily found west of the Cascade Mountains, although it does occasionally appear in eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

And, hey, what's in a name?

It's called *Physocarpus capitatus* because of its puffy, inflated fruits (*physo* = bladder, *carpus* = fruit) and crowded, round flower clusters (*capitatus* = head-like). And "Ninebark" because the shaggy bark seems to go on and on, even unto nine layers.



You can find out more information about native plants, including where to buy them, from the Washington Native Plant Society.

www.wnps.org

206-527-3210 or 1-888-288-8022

Photo: Ben Legler



Washington Native Plant Society

Native Plant Spotlights

Adapted from writing by Sarah Gage

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