Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*)
Honeysuckle Family

**Why Choose It?**

This shrubby member of the Honeysuckle genus has a lot to recommend it. The combination of glossy green leaves, yellow flowers and shiny black berries make it garden worthy, and not only is it attractive, it is easy to grow, and provides food for a wide array of wildlife.

**In the Garden**

Because it is easy to grow and not very finicky, Twinberry can play a whole host of roles in the garden. This moisture tolerant shrub, often used in wetland restoration projects, is a good choice for an area that is wet all winter and never quite dries out in the summer. They also make nice hedges or components of mixed borders. Twinberries also attract butterflies and hummingbirds, for the nectar, and a wide variety of other birds that eat the fruit.

**The Facts**

Twinberries are easy to recognize, they really live up to their name. The glossy green leaves are a nice background for the yellow tubular flowers that grow in pairs, surrounded by bright green to purple bracts. They begin blooming in early spring and continue into summer, with sporadic flowering into fall. The “twin” flowers are followed by, and often overlap with, shiny, dark, purple-black berries, surrounded by the green bracts, which have now turned bright red. Very showy! The plants can grow to about 8 feet tall in gardens, but can be kept to 5 to 6 feet with pruning. Plant in sun to part shade, and give occasional, supplemental summer watering if you don’t have a garden wetland.

**Where to See It**

Twinberry is native along the west coast from Alaska to Mexico. In Washington, it can be found on both sides of the Cascades, from sea level to subalpine elevations. It grows typically in moist woods, along streams, but also thrives in sandy coastal soil near the ocean beaches.
And what’s in a name?

The genus *Lonicera* was named by Linnaeus for a German herbalist, Adam Lonitzer, who lived in the 16th century. The species name, *involucrata*, refers to the bracts, or involucres, that surround the flowers and fruit. This plant has also been called crowberry or raven’s food by local native peoples, who considered the berries too bitter to eat.

Photo: Ben Legler

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

[www.wnps.org](http://www.wnps.org)

Native Plant Spotlights

Adapted from writing by Cynthia Spurgeon

© WNPS