Snow Buckwheat (*Eriogonum niveum*)
Buckwheat Family

**Why Choose It?**

With frosty-green leaves and long-lasting sprays of tiny white to pink flowers, Snow Buckwheat cools the eye in late summer and early fall. Happy on little water, this sub-shrub is well adapted for dry sites and gravelly or sandy soils.

**In the Garden**

As a ground cover or an accent plant in a rockery or sunny bed, Snow Buckwheat's woody taproot will seek out water, anchor the plant in wind, and provide erosion control. The airy flower stalks will start in June and continue through the summer, when its late nectar is important to bees. White-lined sphinx moths may also sip at its flowers, and butterfly caterpillars find food and shelter among the leaves.

**The Facts**

Snow Buckwheat grows as a mat or mound, to about six inches tall, with flower stalks rising eight inches or more. Plant it in full sun and in a gritty to sandy soil with excellent drainage. Water well at planting time, give it some water the first year or two, and it should be off and running.

**Where to See It**

Present throughout the Columbia Basin, Snow Buckwheat grows in sagebrush communities and mixed grasslands, and sometimes among ponderosa pine. Look for it on rocky roadsides and outcrops.
And, hey, is this the buckwheat in my pancakes?

Nope, that’s a Eurasian crop plant, in the genus *Fagopyrum*. The genus *Eriogonum*, with more than 250 species—many of them here in the west—can make a life-long study. Numerous other garden-worthy buckwheats, often sporting lollipop-like clusters of yellow or brick-red flowers, grow throughout the Columbia Plateau and into the mountains.

Photo: Clayton Antieau

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)

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Native Plant Spotlights
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