

**PSEUDOTSUGA MENZIESII /  
SYMPHORICARPOS (ALBUS, HESPERIUS) -  
AMELANCHIER ALNIFOLIA**

Douglas-fir / snowberry - serviceberry

Abbreviated Name: PSME/SYMPH-AMAL

Synonym: *Pseudotsuga menziesii* /

*Symphoricarpos (albus, mollis) - Amelanchier alnifolia*

Sample size = 30 plots

**DISTRIBUTION:** Occurs in the southern Puget Sound area in the vicinity of historic prairies, including portions of Pierce and Thurston, possibly Grays Harbor and Lewis, counties. Not recorded elsewhere.

**GLOBAL/STATE STATUS:** GNRS4. Probably 20-100 occurrences exist. This association has probably increased dramatically since pre-Western settlement era.

**ID TIPS:** Dominated by Douglas-fir, with little to no western hemlock, western redcedar, or grand fir present. Swordfern present but providing <10% cover. Usually co-dominated by one or both of the snowberry species. One or more of the following usually present: long-stolon sedge, woods strawberry, blue wildrye, yerba buena, snow-queen, tall Oregongrape, enchanter's nightshade (*Circaea alpina*), and starry false Solomon's seal.

**ENVIRONMENT:** These sites are moderately dry and appear to be relatively nutrient-rich. Parent material is gravelly sandy glacial outwash. Most sites are flat plains, though also occurs on gentle ridgetops or slopes. Soils usually have a very well-developed A horizon due to their development under grasslands.

**Precipitation:** 39-45 inches (mean 41)

**Elevation:** 200-450 feet

**Aspect/slope:** various/ 0-16% slope (mean 2)

**Slope position:** plain, ridgetop, mid, short

**Soil series:** Spanaway, Fitch, Everett

**DISTURBANCE/SUCCESSION:** In the pre-Western settlement landscape, this association was probably quite rare or even absent. The vast majority of this association formed after the cessation of frequent Native American burning about 150 years ago and the subsequent invasion of grasslands or savannas by Douglas-fir. Douglas-fir is usually the dominant tree regeneration. More shade-tolerant and fire-sensitive conifers like western

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**Vegetation Composition Table (selected species):**

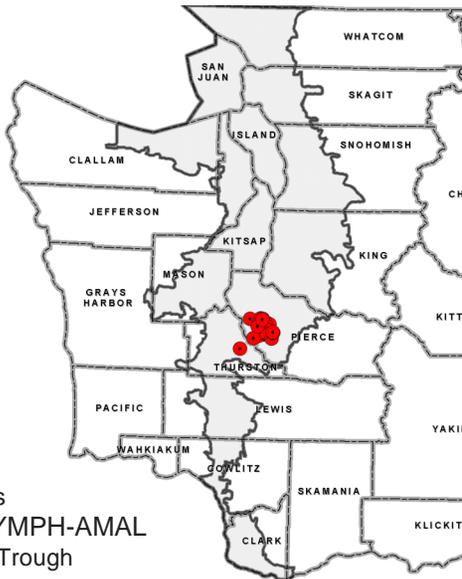
Con = constancy, the percent of plots within which each species was found;  
Cov = cover, the mean crown cover of the species in plots where it was found; + = trace (< 0.5% cover).

| Trees                          | Kartesz 2005 Name                                    | Con | Cov |
|--------------------------------|--|-----|-----|
| Douglas-fir                    | <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> var. <i>menziesii</i>   | 100 | 80  |
| Orgeon white oak               | <i>Quercus garryana</i> var. <i>garryana</i>         | 67  | 4   |
| bigleaf maple                  | <i>Acer macrophyllum</i>                             | 40  | 7   |
| <b>Shrubs and Dwarf-shrubs</b> |  |     |     |
| common snowberry               | <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> var. <i>laevigatus</i>   | 97  | 12  |
| trailing blackberry            | <i>Rubus ursinus</i> ssp. <i>macropetalus</i>        | 93  | 19  |
| spreading snowberry            | <i>Symphoricarpos hesperius</i>                      | 90  | 13  |
| serviceberry                   | <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>                         | 90  | 4   |
| tall Oregongrape               | <i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>                            | 87  | 1   |
| orange honeysuckle             | <i>Lonicera ciliosa</i>                              | 80  | 7   |
| Indian plum                    | <i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>                         | 80  | 5   |
| baldhip rose                   | <i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>                               | 77  | 1   |
| beaked hazelnut                | <i>Corylus cornuta</i> var. <i>californica</i>       | 73  | 13  |
| dwarf Oregongrape              | <i>Mahonia nervosa</i>                               | 57  | 5   |
| oceanspray                     | <i>Holodiscus discolor</i>                           | 53  | 11  |
| Scot's broom                   | <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>                             | 50  | 1   |
| <b>Graminoids</b>              |  |     |     |
| Columbia brome                 | <i>Bromus vulgaris</i>                               | 97  | 5   |
| Alaska oniongrass              | <i>Melica subulata</i>                               | 53  | 4   |
| long-stolon sedge              | <i>Carex inops</i> ssp. <i>inops</i>                 | 43  | 6   |
| Coast Range fescue             | <i>Festuca subuliflora</i>                           | 33  | 3   |
| <b>Forbs and Ferns</b>         |  |     |     |
| sword fern                     | <i>Polystichum munitum</i>                           | 100 | 4   |
| sweet-scented bedstraw         | <i>Galium triflorum</i>                              | 80  | 2   |
| sweet-cicely                   | <i>Osmorhiza berteroi</i>                            | 63  | 1   |
| western starflower             | <i>Trientalis borealis</i> ssp. <i>latifolia</i>     | 60  | 1   |
| pathfinder                     | <i>Adenocaulon bicolor</i>                           | 53  | 1   |
| woods strawberry               | <i>Fragaria vesca</i> ssp. <i>bracteata</i>          | 53  | 1   |
| wall lettuce                   | <i>Mycelis muralis</i>                               | 50  | 5   |
| cleavers                       | <i>Galium aparine</i>                                | 50  | 2   |
| yerba buena                    | <i>Clinopodium douglasii</i>                         | 50  | 2   |
| rattlesnake-plantain           | <i>Goodyera oblongifolia</i>                         | 50  | +   |
| twinflower                     | <i>Linnaea borealis</i> var. <i>longiflora</i>       | 40  | 14  |
| starry false Solomon's-seal    | <i>Maianthemum stellatum</i>                         | 40  | 5   |
| snow-queen                     | <i>Syntherisma reniformis</i> var. <i>reniformis</i> | 37  | 2   |
| Siberian springbeauty          | <i>Claytonia siberica</i> var. <i>siberica</i>       | 33  | 3   |
| bracken fern                   | <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> var. <i>pubescens</i>     | 30  | 5   |

## Douglas-fir / snowberry - serviceberry



Chris Chappell photo



Plot locations  
of PSME/SYMPH-AMAL  
in the Puget Trough

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hemlock are largely absent. Trailing blackberry typically increases with ground disturbance and its great abundance in this association may be a function of the prevalence of such activities on military reservations where the data were collected. Most stands where data were collected for this association had been disturbed by past thinning activities.

**VEGETATION:** Forest dominated by Douglas-fir. Oregon white oak is often present in small amounts and bigleaf maple is occasionally prominent. The understory is rather variable in composition. It is usually co-dominated by common snowberry, creeping snowberry, and trailing blackberry. Beaked hazelnut, oceanspray, and twinflower are less frequently found co-dominating. Other frequent species include serviceberry, tall Oregongrape, orange honeysuckle, Indian plum, baldhip rose, dwarf Oregongrape, Columbia brome, sword fern, sweet-scented bedstraw, mountain sweet-cicely, and western starflower. See ID tips section also.

**CLASSIFICATION NOTES:** This association was described as PSME/SYMPH by Chappell (2001). Not currently recognized by NatureServe (2005), but will be added in the near future.

**MANAGEMENT NOTES:** Well suited to management for Douglas-fir regeneration under a thinned canopy or using uneven-aged management. This association appears to be moderately productive for tree growth.

**BIODIVERSITY NOTES:** This association, because of its local abundance and close association with southern Puget Sound prairies and oak woodlands, is undoubtedly part of the habitat of the state threatened western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), which requires conifers in close proximity to oak and water.