

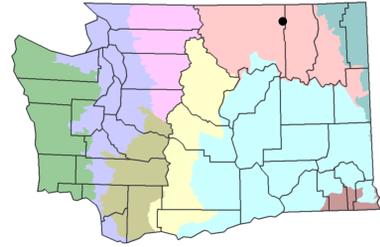
Vaccinium myrtilloides Michx.

velvet-leaved blueberry

Ericaceae - heath family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5 / S1



General Description: From Barnes & Wagner (1981): Low, upright shrub, to 0.5 m tall, deciduous, much branched, straggly, clone-forming. Twigs very hairy, slender, nearly round, smooth, greenish brown. Leaves alternate, simple, blade margins smooth, 1.5-4 x 0.5-1.5 cm, narrow-elliptic to oblong-lanceolate, acute, thin, downy pubescent below, green above; petioles short, about 1 mm long.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers perfect, borne in small terminal clusters (solitary or up to 6 per cluster), short-stalked. Calyx 5-toothed, hairless. Corolla bell-shaped, 5-toothed, 4-6 mm long, greenish white or pink-tinged. Stamens 10, anthers awnless. Flowers May to June.

Fruits: Many-seeded berry, depressed-spherical, bluish black with heavy pale blue bloom, 6-8 mm across, edible. Fruit matures July to August.

Identification Tips: Not in Hitchcock & Cronquist (1973). Distinguished from other low-growing deciduous blueberries by the dense, velvety hairs on the young stems, and leaves that are soft-hairy, especially below. *V. myrtilloides* has awnless anthers, while most other *Vaccinium* have awned anthers.

Range: N.W.T. south to WA and MT, east to Nova Scotia and south to VA and IL.

Habitat/Ecology: The WA population grows mid-slope in an open semimature forest dominated by Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) at about 1070 m (3500 ft), with a well-developed moss layer. Associated species include snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), bunchberry dogwood (*Cornus unalaschkensis*), and twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*). In other parts of its range, *V. myrtilloides* occurs in dry or moist, sandy or rocky clearings and open woods, and in sphagnum bogs and swamps. In natural communities it survives fire below ground. Recolonization occurs by rhizomes and the density of new shoots varies depending on when the burn occurs.

Comments: Threats include timber harvesting, road construction, and land conversion. This species is rare in the southern portion of its range, including CT, IL, IN, IA, MD, MT, OH, VA, and WV.

References: Barnes & Wagner 1981; Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 3; Flinn & Wein 1977; Scoggin 1978; Vander Kloet & Hall 1981.



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