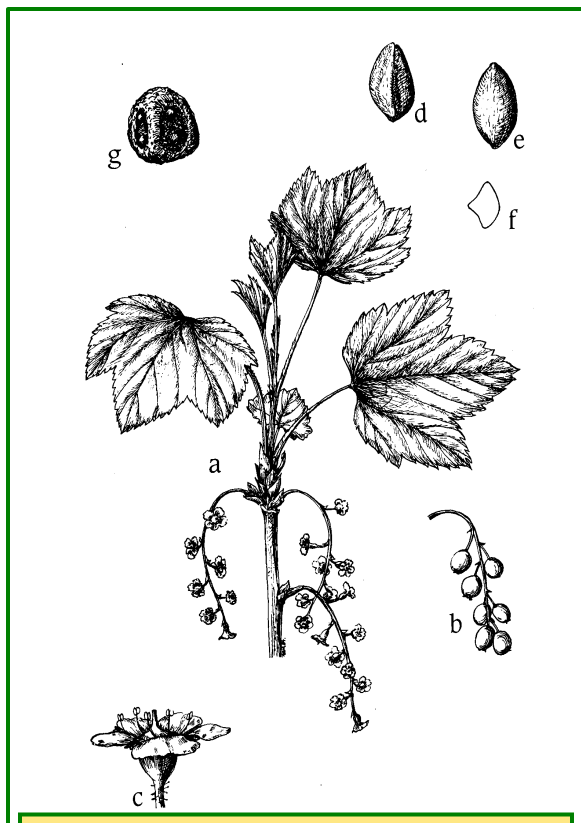


Scientific Name: *Ribes triste* Pallas

Family: *Grossulariaceae*

Common Names: swamp red currant, red currant



***Ribes triste* a. flowering branch b. fruit
c. flower d–f. seeds g. pollen**

Plant Description

Reclining to ascending shrub, up to 1 m tall; branches do not have prickles; leaf palmate, 3 lobed (rarely 5 lobed) shallowly heart shaped or rarely squared at the base; lobes broadly triangular, toothed, maybe hairy below; flowers borne in drooping racemes; reddish or greenish purple, flower stalks are jointed and usually bear gland tipped hairs (Moss 1983).

Fruit: Bright red, smooth berries, about 6 mm across, edible sour (Johnson et al. 1995).

Seed: Seeds are reddish 1 to 2 mm x 1 to 2 mm long, ovoid to round.

Habitat and Distribution

Moist woods, clearings, rocky slopes and swamps in the aspen parkland and boreal forest (Marles et al. 2000).

Seral Stage: Varies from early to climax communities in its range (Ulev 2006).

Soil: Soil pH range between 5 and 7.5 with no tolerance to salt. Soils can range from well to poorly drained coarse and medium textured soil (USDA NRCS n.d.).

Distribution: Alaska, Yukon, northern District of Mackenzie to Hudson Bay, northern Quebec, Newfoundland south to Oregon, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, New Jersey (Moss 1983).



***Ribes triste* with ripening berries**

Phenology

Flowers appear in late May to early June (Johnson et al. 1995). Berries appear July to August (Ulev 2006).

Pollination

Bees are the main pollinators of all *Ribes* species; they gather both nectar and pollen (CYSIP: Botany n.d.). *Ribes* spp. are often wind pollinated (Ulev 2006).

Seed Dispersal

Animal dispersed by numerous predators (Ulev 1990), especially birds (CYSIP: Botany n.d.).

Genetics

2n=16 (Moss 1983).

Seed Processing

Collection: The fruit should be stripped or picked as soon as they are ripe to avoid losses to birds and other wildlife (Young and Young 1992).

Seed Weight: 3.2 g/1,000 seeds.

Harvest Dates: July to August (Ulev 2006).

Cleaning: *Ribes* spp. seeds can be cleaned by maceration and floatation (Young and Young 1992).

Storage Behaviour: Unknown. Likely orthodox, tolerant of drying prior to cold storage.

Storage: *Ribes* spp. seeds can be stored for long periods of time in sealed containers at low temperatures (Young and Young 1992).

Longevity: Marked decline in viability after one year of seed stored at room temperature.

Propagation

Natural Regeneration: By seed and very likely vegetative though the latter is not definitive (Ulev 2006).

Germination: Epigeal (cotyledons above ground) germination (Young and Young 1992).

Nichols (1934) found that a greater percentage of seeds germinated without refrigeration. They also germinated more quickly without stratification.

Pre-treatment: *Ribes* spp. seeds are dormant and require a prolonged stratification and/or a wide variety of diurnal temperatures in order for the seeds to germinate (Young and Young 1992). However, Nichols (1934) found stratification unnecessary.

Direct Seeding: Sow at a depth of 0.6 cm in mulched seedbeds (Young and Young 1992).

Seed Rate: *Ribes* sp. seeds should be sown at a rate of 630 to 340 seeds/m² (Young and Young 1992).

Vegetative Propagation: Many *Ribes* spp. can be propagated by hardwood cuttings taken in the fall (Young and Young 1992).

Aboriginal/Food Uses

Food: Berries are eaten fresh or cooked to make jelly (they have high pectin content (Royer and Dickinson 1996)). The stem can be made into a bitter tea (Marles et al. 2000).

Medicinal: Can be used as an eye wash and to bring on menstruation (Marles et al. 2000, Royer and Dickinson 1996, 2007). The berries can help treat yeast infections (Gray 2011).



Wildlife/Forage Usage

Wildlife: Songbirds, rodents, small and large bears and hoofed browsers (moose, deer etc.) (Ulev 2006).

Livestock: Not used if there is better forage present (Tannas 1997).

Grazing Response: Increaser (Tannas 1997).

Reclamation Potential

Moderately tolerant to acidic soils, *Ribes* sp. do well in medium to coarse textured soil. *Ribes* sp. have

been used for erosion control and to stabilize slopes (Tannas 1997, Ulev 2006).

Commercial Resources

Availability: Not available commercially in Alberta, propagules must be collected from native populations.

Seeds have been collected by the Oil Sands Vegetation Cooperative for use in the Athabasca oil sands region.

Notes

Ribes triste is listed as 83% intact (less occurrences than expected) in the Alberta oil sands region (Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute 2014).

Ribes spp. serve as a host and carrier of pine blister rust (Young and Young 1992).

Photo Credits

Photo 1: Courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey Department of the Interior/USGS U.S. Geological Survey 2011.

Photo 2: Tracey Slotta @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database.

Line Diagram: John Maywood, used by permission of Bruce Peel Special Collections, University of Alberta.

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