

Chrysolepis chrysophylla (Douglas ex Hook.)

Hjelmq. **var. *chrysophylla***

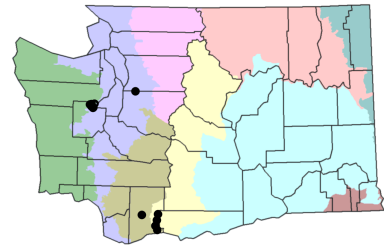
synonym: *Castanopsis chrysophylla* (Douglas ex Hook.) A.
DC.

golden chinquapin

Fagaceae - oak family

status: State Sensitive, BLM sensitive, USFS sensitive

rank: G5T5 / S2



General Description: Large evergreen shrub or small tree 3-30 m tall with thick, heavily furrowed bark. Leaf petioles scarcely 1 cm long; blades lanceolate to elliptic, generally 3-15 cm long, entire, thick, tough, and leathery. Upper leaf surface dark green and hairless or sparsely covered with minute branlike scales and soft, woolly hairs; lower surface yellowish green to golden, densely covered with minute branlike scales and matted, soft, woolly hairs. Leaf bases acute and tips gradually to abruptly acuminate.

Floral Characteristics: Plants monoecious. Male flowers in groups of 3 on elongate, spreading or erect catkins. Female flowers in groups of 1-3 at base of male catkins or in short female catkins.

Fruits: 4-valved, spiny bur 1.5-2 cm broad, containing usually 1 (sometimes 2-3) hard-shelled nuts; nuts 10 (15) mm long. The phenology of chinquapin varies widely over its range.

Identification Tips: The only species in its genus in the Pacific Northwest. *C. chrysophylla* is distinguished by its spreading or erect male catkins, smooth (unlobed) leaf margins, golden yellow lower leaf surface, and spiny burlike fruits enclosing 1-3 nuts. It is closely related to oak (*Quercus*), but oak has drooping male catkins, lobate to pinnatifid leaves (in the Pacific Northwest), and produces acorns with a single nut and cuplike involucre.

Range: WA to southwest OR and northwest CA, reaching Monterey Co., CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Dry open sites to fairly thick woodlands, from 15-1100 m (50-3600 ft). In OR, it grows from near sea level to over 1525 m (5000 ft). It appears to be most competitive on sites that are relatively infertile and droughty. Associated species include Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*), Oregon grape (*Berberis nervosa*), vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), and huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*). *C. chrysophylla* is the only known host to the golden hairstreak butterfly (*Habrodais grunus herri*), which is rare in WA.

Comments: Some populations are degraded due to heart rot and leaf fungus.

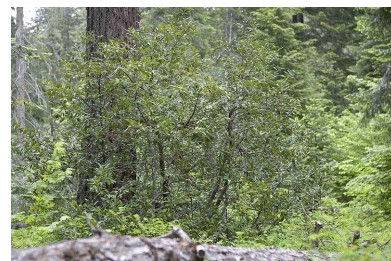
References: Flora of North America 1993+, vol. 3; McKee 1990.



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