

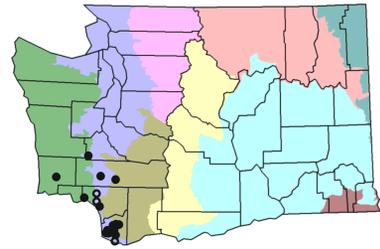
Euonymus occidentalis* Nutt. ex Torr. var. *occidentalis

western wahoo

Celastraceae - staff-tree family

status: State Sensitive, BLM strategic, USFS strategic

rank: G5TNR / S1



General Description: A hairless straggling shrub 2-5 m tall, with slender, sometimes climbing branches that have narrow, parallel, longitudinal ridges. Leaves opposite, deciduous, thin, oblong-lanceolate, serrate, acuminate, 5-10 cm long; stipules minute or lacking.

Floral Characteristics: Flowers 5-parted, on slender peduncles, arranged in axillary, mostly 3-flowered cymes. Sepals rounded; petals about 5 mm long, greenish- and purplish-mottled to purplish red. Flowers May to June.

Fruits: Smooth, leathery, 3-lobed capsule. A reddish orange exterior coat covers the seeds.

Identification Tips: The only species of its genus in the Pacific Northwest, *E. occidentalis* is most closely related to the genus *Paxistima*. However, *Paxistima* has persistent leaves that are 1-3 cm long and 4-parted flowers, whereas *Euonymus* has deciduous leaves over 3 cm long and commonly has 5-parted flowers.

Range: B.C., western WA and OR, south to central CA.

Habitat/Ecology: Moist woods and forested areas on the west side of the Cascade Mts., often in shaded draws, riparian areas, and ravines. It is sometimes found in grassy areas with scattered trees. In the Puget Trough area it's associated with remnant oak savannah. In WA typical soils include fine sandy loam, silty loam, and silty clay loams. Associated vegetation includes Oregon white oak (*Quercus garryana*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), red alder (*Alnus rubra*), vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), and sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*). Elevations in WA: 6-180 m (20-600 ft).

Comments: This species is also rare in OR.

References: Douglas et al. 1998-2002, vol. 2; Hickman 1993.

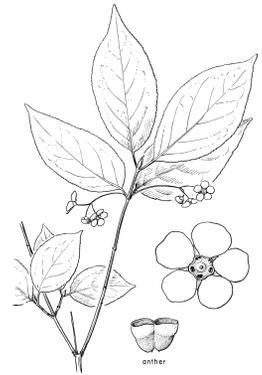


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