

WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*)

Distribution

The native range of Rocky Mountain Juniper generally follows the Rocky Mountains (appropriately enough). There are isolated pockets of native stands dispersed through the eastern half of Washington and Oregon.

Growth Habit

Rocky Mountain Juniper is considered a *tree-like* Juniper species. Even so, it is quite bushy in its growth habit. Some of the largest specimens known have grown over 30 feet tall and spread 6 to 8 feet wide. They probably will not get that big in our region.

Adaptability

Rocky Mountain Juniper is one of the hardier, drought-tolerant conifers around. They generally grow best in areas that receive at least 12" of precipitation annually. They need sun and well-drained soils to thrive.

Comments

- Rocky Mountain Juniper is used in a variety of conservation practices. It is favored for upland soil stabilization on harsh sites due to its hardiness and extensive, fibrous root system. They are also used frequently in mine reclamation projects since they can thrive in nutritionally challenged soils.
- The berries that Rocky Mountain Juniper produces in late summer and fall are an important food source for many species of birds and mammals.
- It is of limited economic value due to the small size of its trunk. Larger specimens are occasionally milled for use as closet and chest linings. The wood is very attractive and decay resistant. Other uses have included fence posts and fuel wood.
- It is also a fine ornamental species and is often used as a specimen plant or planted in groupings to provide screening.

