

## WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

16564 Bradley Road, Bow WA 98232  
(360) 757-1094

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### Russet Buffaloberry (*Shepherdia canadensis*)

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#### Distribution

Russet Buffaloberry is known by a few common names such as Soapberry, Soopalallie, Indian Ice Cream and Canadian Buffaloberry. It can be found primarily east of the Cascades at low to mid-elevations. It is found occasionally in Western Washington, primarily in isolated areas on the Olympic Peninsula and in the San Juan Islands.

#### Growth Habit

It grows as a small multi-stemmed deciduous shrub, reaching 4' to 6' tall with a similar spread. It flowers a nice yellowish color in April-May and bears fruit June through August.

#### Adaptability

Russet Buffaloberry typically prefers a planting site that has good exposure to sun. It will grow well in soils that range from dry to moist, but grows better with some soil moisture present.

#### Comments

- Russet Buffaloberry is used primarily as a conservation species.
- Its berries are an important food source for both birds and small mammals (which in turn, will attract larger mammals).
- It is a good choice for upland soil stabilization east of the Cascades.
- The name Soapberry refers to the soapy suds that is formed when its berries are rubbed together between ones hands. The common name of Indian Ice-Cream refers to its use by native people as a food source.
- When eaten alone, Russet Buffaloberry can be bitter, but are more palatable when salal berries, camas bulbs or hemlock bark are added. The more traditional common name of Russet Buffaloberry refers to the small brownish spots that occur on the underside of the leaves and younger stems.

