

WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)

Distribution

Tall Oregon Grape grows throughout Washington from sea level to the sub-alpine Cascades.

Growth Habit

Tall Oregon Grape is a broad-leaf evergreen shrub. Its growth habit can range from 3 to 15 feet tall, and spreading from 4 to 12 feet wide. Bright yellow showy flower clusters bloom in April to early May. Berries resemble grape clusters that change from green to bluish-black in late summer.

Adaptability

Tall Oregon Grape is adapted to grow in a wide range of conditions throughout the Pacific Northwest. It can be found growing in soils that range from dry to moist and sites that vary from exposed to shady. It is commonly found growing equally well as an understory species in mixed species woodland, or as a pioneering species in disturbed areas.

Comments

- Tall Oregon Grape has numerous uses as a conservation species in the state.
- Its berries are a favored food of many species of birds and rodents, and the young stems and leaves can serve as forage (reluctantly) for deer and elk.
- It is well adapted to growing in drier, exposed sites, making it suitable for many restoration projects.
- It develops an extensive root system in time, making it a good soil stabilizer. It should be noted however, that Tall Oregon Grape can be slow to establish, and may require supplemental irrigation and weed control during the first growing season.
- Tall Oregon Grape has been used as an ornamental species for decades.
- It is favored for its bright yellow flower clusters in spring, the dark purple berries in late summer, and the reddish green leaf color in fall and winter.
- The berries have been used (when absolutely ripe) for preserves.

