

Winterberry Euonymus



Winterberry *Euonymus* (*Euonymus bungeana*)

General Description

A small tree or large rounded shrub with semi-pendulous branches. Native to Manchuria and northern China. Showy pink fruits, opening to expose reddish seeds. Attractive gray bark. The largest shrubs in North Dakota are 13 feet tall with a canopy spread of 12 feet.

Leaves and Buds

Bud Arrangement - Opposite to subopposite, terminal outer bud scales upright creating a stockade-like appearance around meristem, lateral buds imbricate, appressed.

Bud Color - Green to purple-brown.

Bud Size - Medium to small.

Leaf Type and Shape - Simple, elliptic-ovate to elliptic-lanceolate.

Leaf Margins - Acuminate, broad cuneate at base, serrulate.

Leaf Surface - Smooth, glabrous.

Leaf Length - 2 to 4 inches.

Leaf Width - 3/4 to 1½ inches.

Leaf Color - Light to average green; red-purple fall color.

Flowers and Fruits

Flower Type - Cymes on stalks 1 to 1½ inches long.

Flower Color - Yellowish.

Seed Type - Pinkish lobed capsules.

Seed Color - Pink capsules open in mid-autumn to display orange-scarlet arils which are very persistent and colorful after leaves fall.

Form

Growth Habit - Rounded in form with semi-pendulous branches.

Texture - Medium-fine, summer; medium-fine, winter.

Crown Height - 10 to 15 feet.

Crown Width - 10 to 15 feet.

Bark Color - Young stems, greenish, slender, glabrous, almost round, often with slight corky lines. Major stems have distinctive grayish bark.

Root System - Medium in depth.

Environmental Requirements

Soils

Soil Texture - Adapted to a variety of soil types.

Soil pH - 5.0 to 7.5.

Windbreak Suitability Group - 1, 2, 3, 4, 4C, 5.

Cold Hardiness

USDA Zone 4, possibly 3.

Water

Medium in moisture requirements.

Light

Full sun to partial shade.

Uses

Conservation/Windbreaks

Large shrub or small tree for farmstead windbreaks and riparian plantings.

Wildlife

Nesting site for songbirds; fruits toxic if eaten.

Agroforestry Products

Wood - Used in making pipestems, charcoal and gunpowder.

Medicinal - Some *Euonymus* species are used as a laxative, hepatic stimulant, heart medicine, and diuretic. Contains Euonymin which in small dosages stimulates the appetite.

Urban/Recreational

Used for patio trees, border plantings, screen plantings, or single specimen.

Cultivated Varieties

Current named cultivars are borderline in hardiness in North Dakota, but NDSU plans to release a hardier landscape selection with showy fruits.

Related Species

Eastern Wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpurea*)

Pests

No major pest problems in North Dakota State University trials, but *Euonymus* scale further east. Extracts of various *Euonymus* species are toxic to insect pests.