

***Berberis Nervosa*, Dwarf Oregon Grape**

General Botanical Characteristics

Berberis Nervosa is a low-growing rhizomatous evergreen shrub that typically reaches 4 inches to 24 inches in height. The simple stems are ascending to erect and generally occur in loose colonies of several stems. Compound leaves are borne in terminal tufts. Leaflets occur in groups of 7 to 21. Leaflets are dark green, thick, and leathery.



Seasonal Development

Plants flower in early to late spring. Fruit ripens during July and August. Yellow flowers are borne in erect clusters or racemes up to 8 inches (21 cm) in length. The fruit is a large, dark blue, globose berry with a grayish or whitish bloom. Berries are 0.3 to 0.4 inch (8-10 mm) in diameter, occur in clusters, and contain a number of black seeds.

Distribution/Habitat



Dwarf Oregon-grape occurs across a wide range of habitats in submontane to montane forests of the Pacific Northwest. It is a characteristic shrub of spruce-fir forests but also occurs in northern coastal coniferous forests and in redwood, mixed evergreen, and bottomland forests. This shrub occurs on dry to fairly moist sites but reaches its greatest abundance on warmer sites. *Dwarf Oregon-grape* is also common in the warmer Port-Orford-cedar communities. It grows well in sun or shade. It also grows well on a variety of soil types including coarse, shallow rocky soils, coarse alluvium, and glacial outwash. Soils are well drained to poorly drained.

Interesting Facts

- The berries look good, but watch out—they're poisonous!

References

US Forest Service Plant Database, November 2002,
<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/berner/>

Humboldt College, November 2002, <http://www.humboldt.edu/~treefarm/shrubs.html>

Photo from <http://www.rockisland.com/~taichi/natural/graphics/oreongrape.htm>