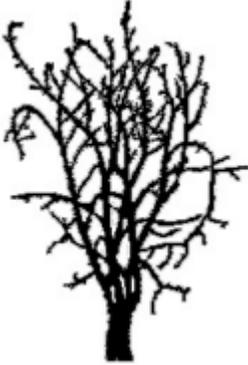


Cascara sagrada (Kc) - *Rhamnus purshiana*

Tree Species > Cascara sagrada



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BC Distribution of Cascara sagrada (Kc)

Range of Cascara sagrada



The leaves of cascara sagrada are very prominently veined and the fruit is black in colour when mature

Geographic Range and Ecological Amplitudes

Description

Cascara sagrada is an erect tall shrub, less often a small-sized (<15 m tall), deciduous broad-leaved tree, at maturity with a narrow crown, slender stem, ascending branches, and smooth, dark grayish-brown, scaly bark. *Cascara sagrada* is not grown for timber production, but was grown for its bark, which contains a laxative of the same name. This use is reviving to some extent.

Geographic Range

Geographic element: Western North American/mainly Pacific and less Cordilleran Distribution in Western North America: central and south in the Pacific region; central and south in the Cordilleran region

Ecological Amplitudes

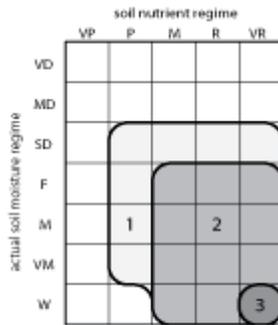
Climatic amplitude:

cool temperate - cool mesothermal

Orographic amplitude:

submontane - montane

Occurrence in biogeoclimatic zones:
(IDF), southern ICH, **CDF**, southern CWH



generalized edaphic amplitude of cascara sagrada according to actual soil moisture and nutrient regimes

Edaphic Amplitude

Range of soil moisture regimes:

(slightly dry) - fresh - moist - very moist - **wet**

Range of soil nutrient regimes:

(poor) - medium - rich - **very rich**

Tolerance and Damaging Agents

Root System Characteristics

Cascara sagrada has a shallow root system with many lateral branches.

Tolerances

tolerance to	tolerance class	comments
low light	M	moderately shade-tolerant in warm mesothermal climates
frost	L	does not tolerate open-area climate
heat	H	frequent on warm and dry sites
water deficit	H	frequent on dry and warm sites
water surplus	H	tolerates flooding and a strongly fluctuating water table
nutrient (mainly N) deficiency	M	absent in acid, very poor soils; infrequent in poor soils

Damaging Agents

damaging agent	resistance class	comments
snow	L	snowfall is very low in the CDF zone
wind	M	high winds will break boles and branches rather than uproot trees

risk class		
fire	L	fire-resistant, except in the early developmental stage
insect	L	not a serious concern
fungi	L	not a serious concern (root and butt rots)

Associated tree species and successional role

In British Columbia, cascara sagrada grows very scattered on disturbed sites in early and intermediate stages of secondary succession, usually in the understory of softwoods or hardwoods. On wet sites, it may be present in late

seral stages.

**Silvical
Characteristics**

characteristic	interpretive comments	class
reproduction capacity	L	very few individuals produce seed in forest understories
seed dissemination capacity	M	distributed by birds
potential for natural regeneration in the open	H	providing the presence of exposed mineral soil
response of advance regeneration to release	na	advance regeneration does not develop in the absence of adequate light and seedbeds
self-pruning capacity in dense stands	na	dense stands are very rare
crown spatial requirements	M	rarely a small tree
light conditions beneath closed-canopy, mature stands	na	closed-canopy stands are very rare
potential productivity	na	non-crop species
longevity	L	occasionally >50 years

Genetics and Notes

Notes

The largest cascara sagrada are found on very moist or wet and nitrogen-rich, coastal sites. The tea or syrup obtained from boiling the bark of cascara sagrada has been proved to be an effective laxative. The plant was also used by First Nations people as a medicine for washing sores and swellings and treating heart strain, internal strain, and biliousness.