

SIBERIAN PEASHRUB

Caragana arborescens Lam.

Plant symbol = CAAR18

Contributed By: USDA, NRCS, National Plant Data Center



Conservation Trees & Shrubs for Montana
USDA, NRCS, Montana State Office

Alternative Names

Ross caragana, Siberian pea tree, pea-tree

Uses

Medicinal: The plant is used for cancer of the breast, the orifice to the womb, and other gynecological problems (Kiangsu 1977).

Wildlife: During World War II, the Siberian peasants reportedly carried their chicken flocks through the winter by feeding them *Caragana arborescens* seeds (Snell 1983). The seeds serve as valuable food for wild life. It also provides cover for upland game.

Agroforestry: *Caragana arborescens* has been recommended as a nitrogen-fixing windbreaker and groundcover plant that binds the soil and produce fiber and dye. It is often used as a single row field shelterbelt for borders, screen plantings, or flowering hedges.

Other uses: Some ethnic groups have used young pods for vegetables. The bark provides a fiber and the leaves yield an azure dye. The wood is used for wood turning.

Status

Introduced into the U.S. Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

General: Pea Family (Fabaceae). Siberian peashrub is an introduced, deciduous shrub or small tree ranging between ten to fifteen feet tall. The leaves are alternate, three to five inches long, with each leaf composed of eight to twelve oval leaflets. The flowers are yellow and appear early in the season forming pods in late June or early July. As the pods ripen, they crack and burst, spreading the seeds. The young bark is smooth and olive green and becomes less vivid in color as the bark ages.

Distribution: Siberian peashrub is native to Siberia and Manchuria. In the United States, its growth is stunted south of Nebraska. For current distribution, please consult the Plant profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

Siberian peashrub succeeds in most well drained soils. It prefers full sun but can tolerate some shade. This species is very tolerant of infertile soils, cold winter temperatures, and drought conditions. It tolerates alkaline soils and deicing salt. This plant's chief value is its ability to adapt to poor sites. It also requires little maintenance.

Establishment

Propagation by Seed: Seed is best sown as soon as it is ripe in a cold frame. Stored seeds should be pre-soaked twenty-four hours in warm water and then sown in a cold frame. If the seeds do not swell, then stratify them and re-soak for another twelve hours before sowing. Germination should occur in two to three weeks at 20°C. Certain pesticides can increase germination possibly by inhibiting disease.

Propagation by cuttings: Layering should be done in the spring. Cuttings should consist of half ripe wood, three to four inches with a heel, and should be done between July and August. Grafting the cultivars, especially 'Pendula', 'Lorbergii', and 'Walker', are top worked at four to six inches height on *Caragana arborescens* seedlings (Dirr & Heuser 1987). *Root cuttings, layering or grafting can also propagate Caragana arborescens.*

Management

General: Siberian peashrub is susceptible to leaf spot diseases, red spider mites, blister beetles, grasshoppers, and aphids, which leads to poor foliage quality in mid to late summer.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

‘Sutherland’, Lorbergii’, ‘Pendula’, ‘Walker’, and ‘Nana’ are cultivars of Siberian peashrub. ‘Sutherland’ has a narrow, upright form. ‘Lorbergii’ has a graceful form with fine textured leaves. ‘Pendula’ has a stiffly weeping form with arching branches. ‘Walker’ is much like ‘Lorbergii’ in leaf character but strongly weeping (Dirr 1990). ‘Nana’ has a dwarf form with somewhat contorted branches.

Consult your local nurseries to choose the right cultivar for your specific landscape.

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