

## WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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### Black Hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*)

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#### Distribution

Black Hawthorn can be found throughout the state at low to middle elevations.

#### Growth Habit

It grows as a deciduous upright tree or spreading shrub. It can reach 12 to 15 feet tall, and equally wide. Plants can grow together creating dense thickets, that are quite impenetrable due to the long thorns (up to 1 ½" in length).

#### Adaptability

Black Hawthorn inhabits a variety of sites. It can be found growing in open places, forest edges, thickets, shorelines, riparian areas, roadsides, and even upland areas. Grows best in sites that are moist with partial shade.

#### Comments

- Black Hawthorn is an excellent soil and stream bank stabilizer.
- It is also an important wildlife species. Its dark purple berries provide food, and thickets provide nesting and brooding cover.
- It has been an important species to man historically. Its berries were food, its wood used for tools, and its thorns were used for piercing ears. It has been noted that Paul Bunyan always used a big hawthorn tree as a back scratcher.
- In many areas of Western Washington, Black Hawthorn is no longer the most common hawthorn species. The cultivated European species, Common Hawthorn, or *Crataegus monogyna*, has naturalized, particularly in the Puget Sound basin. This makes accurate identification very important when collecting seeds and cuttings for propagating this species.

