



Washington Association Of Conservation Districts  
**PLANT MATERIAL CENTER**

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**CASCARA**  
***Rhamnus purshiana***

**Distribution:** Cascara is found throughout Washington at low to mid-elevations, but is more common on the west side of the Cascades.

**Growth Habit:** Cascara typically grows as an upright tree, occasionally reaching 30 feet tall. It is deciduous even though older leaves may persist through winter.

**Adaptability:** Cascara is adapted to grow in a wide range of conditions throughout its range. It can be found growing in soils that range from wet to dry and sites that vary from shady to exposed. Most typically however, Cascara is found growing in moist soils, with some shade present.

**Comments:** Historical demand for Cascara bark for use in the pharmaceutical industry (as a laxative) has resulted in a considerable reduction in the native Cascara population. It was once commonly found growing as a riparian species, and is considered an outstanding species for riparian restoration. It also provides wildlife habitat. Its berries are a favorite food of several species of birds and its stems provide browse for deer and elk.

