

NOTICE OF THE NAMING AND RELEASE OF 'MONTANE' MOUNTAINMAHOGANY
FOR USE IN RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLANTINGS

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The USDA-Soil Conservation Service, the New Mexico State Highway Department, the New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station, and the Colorado Agricultural Experiment Station announce the naming and release of 'Montane' mountainmahogany (Cercocarpus montanus Raf.) for commercial production and sale of seed and plants.

Origin: 'Montane' mountainmahogany seed, accession number NM-715, was collected in October 1964 in the Santa Fe National Forest near Coyote, New Mexico. Additional seed was collected from the same area during 1965 and 1966. Irrigated plantings using this seed have been made at the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center each year since 1965 with one exception. No attempt was made to make selections from this material.

Description: This small tree or shrub may attain a height of 12 or more feet under favorable conditions. The branches are usually upright. They are gray to brown in color and round but roughened by leaf scars.

The upper surface of leaves is green to grayish green. The lower surface is lighter in color and sometimes covered with short hairs. The plants are semievergreen at some locations.

The flowering period is from May to July but flowers; are non showy. The slender round seeds are up to 1/2 inch in length and have a silvery, feather-like tail up to 2-1/2 inches long attached to one end. This tail is quite showy.

Performance: Stand establishment of 'Montane' under irrigation at the Los Lunas PMC have been somewhat erratic, depending upon age of seed and planting date. In general, stands have been satisfactory and in most cases superior to those obtained from other mountainmahogany accessions seeded under the same conditions.

Survival of plants held as potted material has usually been very good. The greatest losses occur the first year. Death loss of potted material can be quite high unless adequate nitrogen fertilizer is applied.

From 1968 through 1976 this variety was included in at least 92 plantings for field testing in Colorado and New Mexico. Potted plants were used in all but 26 of these trials. Some plants survived in 44 percent of the plantings. The failures and high death losses occurred primarily on poor sites or where plants received no maintenance.

Area of Adaptation: This variety is adapted to the mountainous portions of Colorado and New Mexico between 3,500 and 9,500 feet elevation within the natural range of the species. Its area of adaptation can be enlarged through the use of supplemental water. The species is most frequently found growing in somewhat dry rocky areas.

Uses: Within its area of adaptation, 'Montane' mountainmahogany can be used for almost any purpose where woody plants are desired. It can be used as a component of windbreaks, for planting on mine spoils or other disturbed areas, for various kinds of landscaping, and as a browse plant. It is relished by cattle, sheep, goats, deer, and elk. Its palatability should be considered prior to putting it into roadside plantings. The plants can be killed by overgrazing.

Successes of direct seedings in wildlands have been poor. Revegetating large acreages with live plants of mountainmahogany is expensive.

Propagation: This variety is seed propagated. Stratification of the seed is recommended to help obtain good stands. The easiest method is to plant the seed prior to February and keep the soil moist until the seedlings emerge during May.

Irrigated plants are about eight years old before they produce seed. Seed production at Los Lunas has been poor. Seed held in good storage conditions has maintained relatively good viability for 10 years.

Seedlings grow slowly. Most plants need to be at least two years old before they are large enough to dig and use for potting or bare-root material.

Seedlings tolerate reasonably large amounts of soil salts. However, water containing a ton of soluble salts per acre-foot of water will cause salt burn on the leaves if it is applied through sprinklers on hot spring and summer days.

About 300 pounds of available nitrogen per acre, per year, must be applied to 'Montane' mountainmahogany plants held as potted plants. Otherwise, death loss is high.

Source of seed and plants: Breeder seed will be maintained by the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center. Limited numbers of live plants will be available for establishing seed source nurseries. Seed and plants for these uses will be available from the Los Lunas PMC through resource conservation districts and New Mexico Crop Improvement Association. Seed will be on hand for the initial commercial production of plants.

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