



# BWSR Featured Plant

**Name: Wild Red Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)**

**Plant Family: Rosaceae**



Growing up to seven feet tall, Wild Red Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*) is a hearty shrub that can survive in a variety of environmental conditions ranging from roadsides to wetlands. It can thrive in disturbed landscapes including areas that have been burned or cleared and spreads quickly from seed or rhizomes. The species plays the important roles of stabilizing soils and filtering water in riparian habitats and is also important for insects and mammals alike for its prolific flowers and sweet red fruit. It is one of 33 *Rubus* species (raspberries, blackberries, dewberries, etc.) in Minnesota.

**Wetland Indicator Status:**  
Great Plains – FACU  
Midwest – FACU  
N. Cent. N. East - FAC

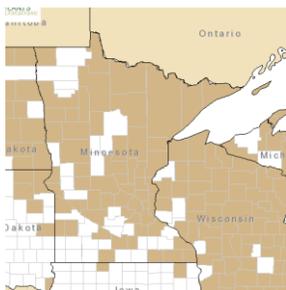
Bright red fruit develop in mid to late summer  
Image by Peter Dziuk, Minnesota Wildflowers

## Identification

Abundant white flowers develop in flat-topped clusters with each flower approximately a half inch in diameter. With multiple stems, the leggy, slender canes have smooth bark with stiff bristles. The egg-shaped leaves are alternate and compound with three to five lobes. First year canes will usually have five parted leaves. Second year canes develop only three parted leaves. Leaf surfaces are medium green and hairless while the underside is paler with fuzzy hairs. The edges are double toothed. The bright red berries develop in mid-summer and are eaten by birds and mammals alike.



Flowers are a rich sources of pollen and nectar for pollinators  
Image by Katy Chayka, Minnesota Wildflowers



## Range

Wild Red Raspberry can be found throughout Minnesota and most of the United States, absent only in the Gulf area. It is tolerant of disturbance and favors sites with well drained loamy soils, but can tolerate soils with rock, peat, or sand as well as soil compaction and drought. Due to its versatility, it is found in a wide range of habitat include roadsides, along trails, abandoned pastures, woodland edges, rock piles, young hardwood forests, meadows, and swamps.

Range based on University of MN Herbarium data.

## Uses

Wild Red Raspberry is an abundant fruit in the wild and has long been a valuable resource for people and wildlife. The leaves have historically been used for tea in treatment of digestive complications, menstrual cramps, and as an aid in childbirth. The leaves and roots are gargled to treat tonsillitis, mouth sores, and ulcers. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century physicians prescribed the berries as a remedy for heart disease. The fruit also provides purple-blue dye and is the main ingredient for jams, jellies, candies, pies, and other baked goods. The open and accessible flowers are also an important source of nectar and pollen for a wide range of native bees, honeybees, and butterflies. Raspberries have also been an important food source to birds, raccoons, coyotes, squirrels, skunks, and chipmunks, while their thickets provide nesting habitat for rabbits, birds, and rodents.

### Primary Uses:

- Medicinal
- Food
- Pollinator Habitat

## Planting Recommendations

Wild Red Raspberry establishes quickly and easily by seed and is widely spread by birds and mammals. Once established, rhizomes vigorously and aggressively populate an area creating dense thickets. If propagating manually, Wild Red Raspberry seeds need stratification for one month at 3°C and are often placed in individual pots to grow in a cold frame or greenhouse over winter. Propagation by cuttings should be established in a sheltered location, out of full sun and dry wind exposure. Raspberries can be propagated by cuttings as well as by transplanting rhizomes in spring or fall after frost.

### Planting Methods

- Seed
- Cuttings
- Transplanting

## Similar Species



*Black Raspberry can look similar to Wild Red Raspberry but have prickles instead of bristles and develop black fruit.*

*Rubus idaeus* and *Rubus occidentalis* (Black Raspberry) are frequently found together due to their similar habitats and site tolerance. Both species are native perennials which propagate by seed and rhizomes. *Rubus idaeus* has gland tipped hairs on second year canes in addition to stiff slender bristles that are not tip-rooting and it has consistently red fruit. Alternatively, *Rubus occidentalis* lacks the gland-tipped hairs and has canes with rooting tips, sharp prickles (compared to stiff bristles), and fruit that turns purple-black when ripe.

## References

Trees and Shrubs of Minnesota by Welby R. Smith

USDA Plants Database: [http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs\\_ruid.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_ruid.pdf)

Minnesota Wildflowers: <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/shrub/wild-red-raspberry>

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden:

<http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org/pages/plants/wildredraspberry.html>