

Sandhill Vegetation

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CREEPING JUNIPER



In the December issue we looked at the Prickly Milk-vetch and the Bur-ragweed, two representatives of our duneland vegetation. Leaving the duneland area and coming to what is known as the sandhills, we find changes in our vegetative cover.

A very common, low growing shrub found in the sandhills is the Creeping Juniper, *Juniperus horizontalis* Moench. This perennial species has long gnarled woody stems that spread out over the ground often to a length of 12 feet. The leaves are awl-shaped or scale-like and overlap each other. They are about 1/16 inch long and form narrow branchlets up to 1/2 inch long. The fruit consists of 3 to 6 fleshy scales, each containing a seed and joined to form a bluish, berry-like cone, about 1/4 inch long. Large mats of this plant are often found on dry banks

SAND DOCK



and sandy hill-sides and prove very effective in binding the loose soil.

Sand dock, *Rumex venosus* Pursh, is a perennial member of the Buckwheat family that is often an early invader of the shifting sand dunes. This species grows up to a height of 18 inches from running woody rootstocks. The sheathing stipules or ocrea are paper-like in texture, white and quite conspicuous. The pale green leaves are from 2 to 5 inches long and nearly half as wide. The flowers consist of 6 sepals, the three inner ones enlarging and forming wings or valves which enclose the fruit. These valves are large, often 1 1/2 inches across, round and bright red to pink in color. The mature plants are often picked and dried to form winter bouquets. Sand dock is found on sandy soils, sand dunes and roadsides throughout the southwest.