

variety *verticillaris* on basis of comparison with voucher material and measurements given by Boivin for sepals, i.e. 2.0 - 4.5 mm long. This would indicate a westward extension and first record of this variety in Saskatchewan. Additional collections both in Manitoba and Saskatchewan are needed to substantiate the hypothesis. The area of transition between the varieties *verticillaris* and *columbiana* has yet to be located.

- <sup>1</sup>BOIVIN, B. 1968-1969. *Flora of the Prairie Provinces, Part II. Phytologia*, volume 16-18, pages 219-339, and 59-293.
- <sup>2</sup>FERNALD, M. L. 1950. *Gray's Manual of Botany*. Eighth edition. New York, pages 1-1632.
- <sup>3</sup>HOOPER, R. 1954. *Blue Jay*, 12 (2): 15. The Saskatchewan Natural History Society.
- <sup>4</sup>SCOGGAN, H. J. 1957. *Flora of Manitoba*. National Museum of Canada Bulletin 140, p. 1-619, 15 plates, 1 fig.

## CANADA PLUM

### In Southwestern Alberta

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In the fourth (1949), fifth (1956) and sixth (1961) editions of *Native Trees of Canada*, the distribution of Canada Plum (*Prunus nigra* Ait.) is given as follows: "... from the valley of the St. John River in New Brunswick westward throughout southern Quebec and southern Ontario, in the region on Lake Superior west of Port Arthur in western Ontario, and north to Riding Mountain in Manitoba. It is also reported at the fords of several rivers in southern Alberta ...". The seventh edition of *Native Trees of Canada* (1969) by R. C. Hosie made no mention of the Alberta report. This, according to T. C. Brayshaw (*in lit.*), was deleted because no specimens could be found to substantiate the report.

In the fall of 1971, a small population of this species reaching a height of only 10 ft., was found near Cardston in southwestern Alberta. At that time only a minimum collection

was made in the hope of securing flowering material in the spring. Unfortunately, the fall and winter of 1971-72 were extremely severe and buds and small twigs were killed back. Sucker growth did appear but there were no flowers. Herbarium material of this sucker growth was gathered together with portions of the dead branches which bore the characteristic spinescent twigs. Data are as follows:

SW Alberta, in deep loam soil on east-facing bank of coulee leading into Lee Creek 1-1/2 miles south of Cardston, elev. 3800 ft. (SE 1/4, Sec 4, Twp 3, R 25, West of 4), *R. K. Shaw 2170* (DAO); *1218* (BRY).

A second stand was found nearby after the leaves had dropped (NW 1/4, Sec 4, Twp 3, R 25, West of 4). During a spell of warm clear weather in November, 1972, another opportunity was taken to search the area for Canada Plum. On this search an uncounted number of plants with lower stems of various sizes from 1/2-inch diameter to 1 inch, 2 inches, 3 inches and a very few to 4 inches in diameter were found. Heights ranged from 3 ft. to 12 ft. Plants were also found along Lee Creek within a 1-mile radius of the original finds.

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Most of the individuals were growing in the midst of very dense thickets of Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) and Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), with some clumps of Tartarian Honeysuckle (*Lonicera tatarica*), in rather shallow sandy loam soil overlying the coarser gravels of the river bottom forest of Lee Creek. In the stands first discovered, the Canada Plum became obvious after sheep had grazed back the other shrubs and left shrubs of Canada Plum, Fireberry Hawthorn (*Crataegus chrysoarpa*) and Tartarian Honeysuckle untouched.

The presence of Tartarian Honeysuckle, an exotic species which is very common in the coulees, raises the question of the possible introduction of Canada Plum in this area. None of the situations where it was found, however, were likely spots for planting, and it is not to be found planted around the adjacent farmsteads. Also Mr. Cardwell, upon whose property the plum was found, has no knowledge of any plantings since 1927, and the next closest farmstead, once owned by the Cardwell family, has not been occupied since the late 1920's.

An enquiry to the Alberta Horticultural Research Centre at Brooks has revealed that Canada Plum shrubs had been sent out to individuals in the Cardston area in 1955, 1968 and 1969. Also some 'Tall Fruit Bundles' which probably contained some Canada Plum were distributed to the Cardston area between 1954 and 1966 (B. Casement, *in lit.*). Unfortunately, however, their records do not go back beyond 1954, which is too recent to account for the larger plants found.

Canada Plum appears to be propagating itself in the Cardston area, at least in favourable years. From the statement in the earlier editions of *Native Trees of Canada*, the fact that the habitat is remote from farmsteads, and the evidence of the landowner, it would appear that Canada Plum in the Cardston area of southwestern Alberta does represent a wild, native population.



Keith Shaw

Miss Marnie Cardwell (age 12) beside small tree of Canada Plum near Cardston, Alberta. Sept. 30, 1971.

The collections and observations documented here definitely substantiate the earlier reports of the presence of *Prunus nigra* in southern Alberta. It would now be most interesting to examine similar situations in southern Alberta to ascertain the extent of its occurrence. The nearest known stands are in southeastern Manitoba, over 700 miles to the east, but the species should be looked for in the coulees and thickets west through Saskatchewan and in North Dakota and Montana, where it has not been recorded.

In the eastern part of its range, Canada Plum often reaches the stature of a small tree as much as 30 ft. in height. In the west, however, it is usually shrubby in habit. Canada Plum and the closely related Wild Plum (*P. americana*), which reaches its western limit in southern Saskatchewan, may readily be distinguished from other

species of *Prunus* in the region, even when fruits are lacking, by their usually spinescent stems. Canada Plum may be separated from the Wild Plum

by the rounded teeth of the leaves which end in a large gland rather than the teeth being finely upwardly acuminate, as in the latter species.



White Birch. Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan.

Fred Lahrman