

# RANGE EXTENSIONS OF TWO RARE ALBERTA SHRUBS

by J. KUIJT\* AND J. A. TROFYMOW\*

This note reports interesting range extensions for two rare Alberta shrubs, the Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum* Sarg.) and the Mock Orange (*Philadelphus Lewisii* Pursh).

A single isolated tree of the Rocky Mountain Juniper was discovered by one of us (J.A.T.) in the Oldman River valley directly north of Lethbridge. The tree is 12'4" tall and has the typical upright form encountered throughout its normal geographic range (Fig. 1). Several of the lower branches on the northeast (leeward) side have become partially buried and have grown into erect, secondary stems. The main trunk is about 14" in circumference at the base. A core extracted from the lowest portion showed approximately 45 rings.

The tree is located just above the floor of the main valley, in the lower portion of a coulee which runs to the north. Although the tree is, therefore, in a somewhat protected site, the photograph shows that it is not in a ravine, but is surrounded by common low coulee vegetation, including the only other juniper which occurs locally, the Creeping Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* Moench). There are neither trails nor roads in the im-

mediate vicinity, nor evidence of any past habitation. A collection has been deposited in the University of Lethbridge Herbarium (Kuijt and Trofymow No. 4745).

A search at the relevant herbaria, including the National Museum at Ottawa, shows that *Juniperus scopulorum* so far is known only from three separate areas in Alberta, all within the mountains, and usually on dry south-facing slopes. Moss suggested that some semi-erect individuals in the Banff and Crowsnest Pass area had been produced by browsing.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Val Geist (University of Calgary; pers. comm.) confirms that junipers are an important browse plant for mule deer and, in certain regions, for mountain sheep. However, the individuals Moss referred to are more likely to be intermediates between *J. scopulorum* and *J. horizontalis*, as are certain Waterton Lakes specimens present in the University of Lethbridge Herbarium. Typical erect Rocky Mountain Juniper is also known from Waterton Lakes. In the Crowsnest Pass, typical shrubs may be seen on dry, southern exposures as far east as the western edge of the Frank Slide. Dr. Keith Shaw (Cardston; pers. comm.) also reports a single, isolated small tree at Glenwood near Cardston (Sec. 34 T4 R27 W4). These two localities are some 70 and 40 miles distant, respectively, from the Lethbridge tree. The tree would therefore, seem to represent a remarkably clear-cut example of natural long-distance dispersal.

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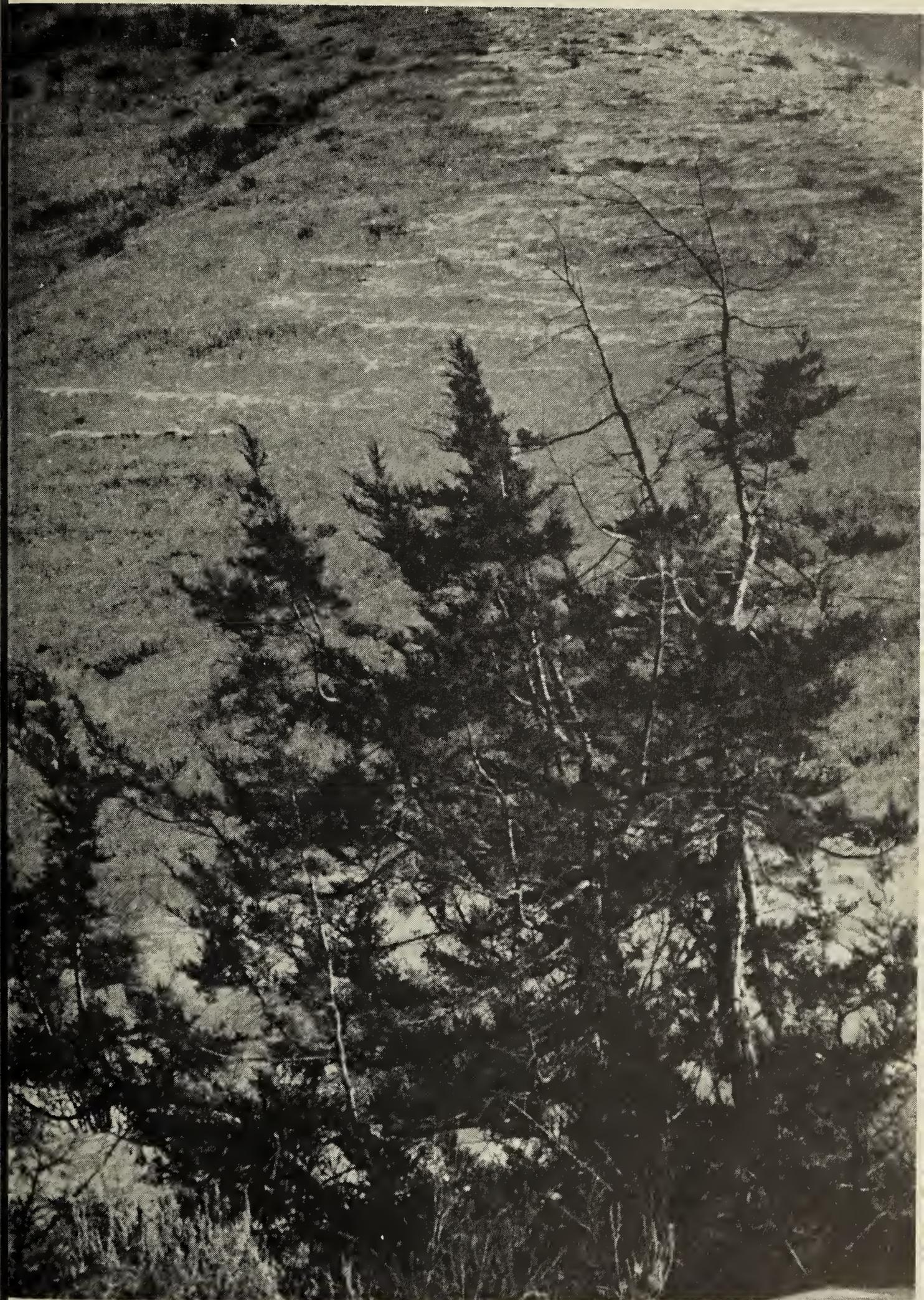


Fig. 1. Rocky Mountain Juniper in the Oldman River Valley north of Lethbridge.

J. A. Trofymow.

Juniper berries are said to be eaten readily by many animals, the seeds not being digested.<sup>1</sup>

The Mock Orange is a common and decorative shrub in the valleys east of the continental divide, but in Alberta it has so far been known only in the Waterton Lakes area, where it grows very sparsely on a few rock outcroppings on the southern slope of Mt. Crandell near the townsite. It also grows luxuriantly in a small, east-facing ravine just north of the former locality. In the summer of 1974, a small colony of this shrub was discovered on the lower south-facing slopes of an unnamed ridge of red shale on the Alberta side of Mt.

Darrah, west of Pincher Creek. A specimen from this locality has been deposited at the University of Lethbridge Herbarium (Kuijt No. 4743). The similarity of the site to that of the first-mentioned Waterton site was striking. It seems entirely possible that other, comparable southern slopes between Mt. Darrah and Waterton Lakes will yield further specimens of this attractive shrub.

<sup>1</sup>HITCHCOCK, C. L., A. CRONQUIST, and M. OWNBEY. 1969. *Vascular plants of the Pacific Northwest, Vol. 1*. Univ. Washington Press, Seattle.

<sup>2</sup>KUIJT, JOB. 1973. *New plant records in Waterton Lakes National Park, Alberta*. Can. Field-Nat. 87:67-69

<sup>3</sup>MOSS, E. H. 1959. *Flora of Alberta*. Univ. Toronto Press.

## TODAY'S WEEDS — TOMORROW'S VEGETABLES

by AL GRASS\*

The other day I read an article in a garden magazine regarding "weeds" and it has prompted me to offer the following comments.

I would like to suggest that one man's weed is another man's wildflower. A weed, it seems, is a plant which competes with more "suitable" plant varieties. Should not a rose bush in a carrot patch be considered a weed? After all, it is stealing nutrients from the tasty carrot.

Some of our most beautiful wildflowers are weeds:

*"Fringing the stream at  
every turn  
Swing low the waving  
fronds of fern;  
From stoney cleft and  
mossy sod  
Pale asters spring and  
golden rod."*

Every garden should have a weed patch. This has a dual purpose — to encourage small birds and insects to visit with you and so that you will have some weeds to study and admire. What better way to spend one's time than to cultivate dandelions for sparrows and finches?

Have you ever thought that today's weeds may be tomorrow's vegetables? We can imagine such tasty treats as creamed *Stellaria* on toast wedges and sweet pickled pigweed. Even today we can enjoy such treats as lamb's quarters and dandelion greens.

Nothing is worse than a garden without weeds. Give me a weed patch anytime. There is a thousand-fold more to admire in weeds than in their sickly pampered garden kin.

\*From *The Victoria Naturalist*, 31(9) May, 1975.