

Prunus virginiana - (Prunus americana) Shrubland

COMMON NAME Choke Cherry - (American Plum) Shrubland
SYNONYM Choke Cherry - (American Plum) Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS Shrubland (III)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS Deciduous shrubland (III.B)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP Cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP Natural/Semi-natural (III.B.2.N)
FORMATION Temperate cold-deciduous shrubland (III.B.2.N.a)
ALLIANCE PRUNUS VIRGINIANA SHRUBLAND ALLIANCE

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Terrestrial

RANGE

Badlands National Park

American plum stands, occasionally mixed with chokecherry, occupy mesic draws, typically at the head of green ash or Rocky Mountain juniper woodland types. A few stands are also found at the seep zone on the edge of sandhills, mesic hillslope slumps, and in old river oxbows.

Globally

This community has a wide distribution, being reported from states primarily in the northwestern United States, including the northwestern Great Plains, but also in Nevada.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

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American plum stands occupy moderately sloping to nearly level mesic draws and nearly level oxbows. These stands occur at the head of woodland types and are often bordered by western snowberry shrublands.

Globally

In Colorado, this association grows at the interface between the riparian areas and the adjacent upland. Stands usually occur as small pockets on higher terraces or as narrow bands along the high water mark of steep banks and incised channels. It can also grow at the base of cliffs adjacent to rivers and streams where it forms impenetrable thickets (Colorado NHP personal communication 1998). In southwestern South Dakota, stands are found in a variety of habitats. Slope varies from flat to very steep, with variable aspect. Stands are commonly found in the bottoms of draws and drainages. This type also occurs associated with rock outcrops (H. Marriott personal communication 1999, Von Loh *et al.* 1999).

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Badlands National Park

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Shrub	<i>Rhus trilobata</i> , <i>Ribes odoratum</i> , <i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> , <i>Prunus virginiana</i> , <i>Prunus americana</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Nassella viridula</i> , <i>Pascopyrum smithii</i> , <i>Poa pratensis</i>

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Short Shrub	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Badlands National Park

Prunus americana, *Prunus virginiana*, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*, *Ribes odoratum*, *Poa pratensis*

Globally

Prunus virginiana

OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES

Globally

<u>Stratum</u>	<u>Species</u>
Short Shrub	<i>Prunus americana</i> , <i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>
Graminoid	<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i> , <i>Poa pratensis</i>

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Badlands National Park

American plum shrubland stands are near 100% cover wherever they occur. The stands are very dense and compact in the draws occupied and are dominated by American plum (*Prunus americana*) and choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*). A variety of other shrubs are always present and western snowberry (*Symphoricarpos occidentalis*) with poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii*) typically form a border around the taller shrubs. Herbaceous species cover is sparse with Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*),

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Badlands National Park

western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), and green needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*) the most common species noted.

Globally

In Colorado, this community type is a medium-height (1.5-2 m) shrubland with dense vegetation that is almost impossible to walk through. (Colorado NHP pers. comm. 1998). In southwestern South Dakota, this type is characterized by moderate to dense shrub cover, typically in the 25-75% range. Shrub cover is generally greater in drainage bottoms and on lowermost slopes, and less on slopes. *Prunus virginiana* may be the dominant shrub species, but often other species are codominant or dominant, especially on slopes, including *Prunus americana*, *Rhus trilobata*, *Amorpha canescens*, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* and *Toxicodendron pubescens*. In drainage bottom situations, herbaceous cover is usually sparse, less than 10%. On slopes, the shrubs typically occur in some grassland type, and graminoid cover can be greater than 75%.

CONSERVATION RANK G4Q. This type is widespread, but it represents a broadly defined dominance type, with little information on the associated species or habitats that might help define the type more precisely. If, for example, a Great Plains type was separated out from the other types, such a type could be relatively rare.

DATABASE CODE CEGL001108

MAP UNITS The American plum shrubland type is represented by map class 34 (Choke cherry - (American plum) Shrubland) on the Badlands NP vegetation map.

SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS

Fraxinus pennsylvanica - *Ulmus americana* / *Prunus virginiana* Woodland

COMMENTS

Badlands National Park

American plum shrublands grade into western snowberry patches along their margins and into woodland communities lower in the drainage occupied. Many stands were visited during the course of data collection, map verification and accuracy assessment work. They are classified globally as part of the *Prunus virginiana* - (*Prunus americana*) Shrubland type, as mixtures often occur. However, at Badlands NP, American plum is the typical dominant.

Globally

Stands dominated by *Prunus americana* only occur in the eastern (Great Plains) part of this types range, and they may either form a separate type. Some stands on slopes are the result of recent fire that killed the overlying canopy, converting a *Pinus ponderosa* / *Prunus virginiana* Forest (CEGL000192) to this *Prunus virginiana* shrubland type.

REFERENCES

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