

Symphoricarpos occidentalis Shrubland

COMMON NAME	Wolfberry Shrubland
SYNONYM	Shrub ravine
TNC SYSTEM	Terrestrial
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Deciduous shrubland
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Cold-deciduous shrubland
FORMATION	Temporarily flooded cold-deciduous shrubland
ALLIANCE	<i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> Temporarily Flooded Shrubland Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

RANGE

This community is widespread in western Montana and North Dakota. It is also present in Nebraska, South Dakota, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan.

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This community occurs throughout plains and lower- to mid-slopes of escarpments.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Globally

This community is found in mesic swales, depressions, ravines and floodplains. Some examples of this community experience intermittent and brief flooding. The soils are fertile and well drained to imperfectly drained silts and loams.

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Symphoricarpos occidentalis Shrubland occupies lower-slopes of escarpments and walls, and beds of draws and channels on the plains. Soils are colluvial silt and sandy loam and not rapidly drained.

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Not applicable

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Globally

<u>Strata</u>	<u>Species</u>
Short shrub	<i>Rhus aromatica</i> , <i>Rosa woodsii</i> , <i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i>
Woody vine	<i>Parthenocissus vitacea</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i> , <i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>

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<u>Strata</u>	<u>Species</u>
Short shrub	<i>Rhus aromatica</i> , <i>Ribes aureum</i> var. <i>villosum</i> , <i>Symphoricarpos occidentalis</i> , <i>Toxicodendron rydbergii</i>
Woody vine	<i>Parthenocissus vitacea</i>
Herbaceous	<i>Bromus</i> spp., <i>Clematis ligusticifolia</i> , <i>Poa pratensis</i> , <i>Parietaria pensylvanica</i> , <i>Nepeta cataria</i>

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES

Globally

Rhus aromatica, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

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Rhus aromatica, *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION

Throughout its range this community is dominated by shrubs approximately 1 m tall. Shrub cover is typically greater than 50%. In places it can approach 100%. These shrubs form dense clumps that exclude most other species. *Symphoricarpos occidentalis* is the most common shrub, but *Rhus aromatica* and *Prunus virginiana* can be locally abundant. *R. aromatica* and *P. virginiana* can grow to 2-3 meters in places. Herbaceous species and smaller shrubs are most abundant at the edge of this community and in gaps between the clumps of taller shrubs where the shading is less complete. *Rosa woodsii* is a typical smaller shrub. *Achillea millefolium*, *Artemisia ludoviciana*, *Galium boreale*, and *Pascopyrum smithii* are common herbaceous species of this community. Woody vines sometimes occur. *Parthenocissus vitacea* is the most common vine.

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This community is densely vegetated, especially in deep narrow draws. It is dominated by *Rhus aromatica* and/or *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*, often with *Ribes aureum* var. *villosum* and *Prunus virginiana*. *Juniperus scopulorum* can be found in this community also, especially west of Scotts Bluff. *Toxicodendron rydbergii* is often abundant in the understory. The herbaceous stratum is poorly developed at most sites and consists of exotics such as *Bromus japonicus*, *Poa pratensis*, and *Nepeta cataria*. Where shrub cover is less dense prairie grasses such as *Bouteloua curtipendula*, *Calamovilfa longifolia*, and *Schizachyrium scoparium* are found. Woody and herbaceous vines (*Parthenocissus vitacea* and *Clematis ligusticifolia*, respectively) are frequently mixed in with the shrubs.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES Information not available.

CONSERVATION RANK G4

RANK JUSTIFICATION Information not available.

COMMENTS

Globally

This community often has a significant component of exotic species, especially where grazing has been intense. *Bromus inermis*, *Cirsium arvense*, and *Poa pratensis* are the most abundant of these exotics. Overgrazing of prairies can lead to the expansion of degraded forms of this community.

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Juniperus virginiana occurs (and may have been planted) in some of the draws in which this community occurs. One large draw just north of Hwy 92 and west of Mitchell Pass contains significant *Juniperus* spp. but is placed in this community.

REFERENCES

Hansen, P. L. and G. R. Hoffman. 1987. The Vegetation of the Grand River/Cedar River, Sioux, and Ashland Districts of the Custer National Forest: A Habitat Type Classification. Gen. Tech. Rep RM-157. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Fort Collins, CO. 88 pp.

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