

Oemleria - Growing Guide

Growing Oemleria Cerasiformis

Commonly known as 'Indian Plum' or 'Oregon Berry'

This plant is a nurseryman's dream! It grows easily from simple hardwood stem cuttings set outside in a pot or cold frame over winter. Easier still is simply to chop off and pot the suckers which emerge in profusion from all around this American clump forming bush in the autumn when it goes dormant.

Camellias aside, this is one of the very first shrubs to flower in the garden in early spring. When you see oemleria out it is time to expect the ribes to be showing as well.

We grow it in the woodland garden on a bank where it has invaded the territory for 3-5ft around it. In time the central plant seems to die of old age as the side suckers expand outwards. It is a good plant also to grow in a shrub border alongside *Corylopsis pauciflora*.

With us oemleria grows to perhaps 5 or 6ft. It has small bell shaped, almond scented, white flowers in small racemes in February or March. The odd flower persists into April amid the leaves which have fully formed by then. The leaves are a soft grey-green and contrast well with the flowers as they emerge.

This is a very hardy American plant which provided useful plum-like purple black fruits for generations of native Indians. You do not need to bother with growing the seeds which seem only to form occasionally in our wet climate. Do not eat them either as they are very bitter and almond scented!



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