



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

Common Name: Big sagebrush
Scientific Name: *Artemisia tridentata*
Plant Family: Asteraceae

Identifying Characteristics:

Size: A tall, rounded shrub, usually less than 30 cm (12 in) in height, but it has been observed to grow as high as 4 to 5 meters (15 ft) tall when conditions are highly favorable.

Leaves: Leaves wedge-shaped, generally 1 to 3 cm long, although they can reach 6 cm in length. Leaves are usually 3- or 5-toothed at the tip, although sometimes the leaf tips are rounded. The surfaces of the leaves are silvery to gray-green and covered with dense hairs. If you crush and smell the leaves, you will find that they are highly aromatic.

Flowers: Flowers are small and borne in dense heads that are 2.0 – 2.5 mm in diameter, located at the tips of the erect stems. They are usually rather inconspicuous, so take a close look!

Habitat: Common in habitats with dry soils, and on desert slopes, including valleys and slopes 300 – 3000 m (1000 to 10000 ft) elevation and higher.

Bloom time: Buds typically form in June; Flowering and seed ripening occur in the fall.

Information source:
The Jepson Manual. 1993. University of California Press; U. S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Did you know? Sage grouse depend on big sagebrush for food more than any other species. Up to 70 – 75% of their diet is composed of the leaves and flower heads of big sagebrush. Antelope and mule deer also eat big sagebrush leaves and stems during the fall, winter, and spring. A variety of birds can also be found hiding in the brush provided by sagebrush, including sage grouse, sharp tailed grouse, prairie sparrows, chukar, quail, and gray partridge.



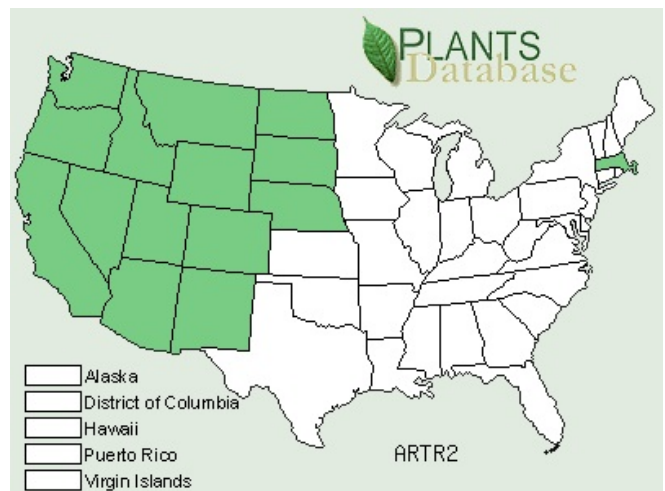
Photograph by J.S. Peterson. USDA NRCS NPDC. USA, CO., Denver Botanic Gardens, August 11, 2003.



Photograph by J.S. Peterson. USDA NRCS NPDC. USA, UT, Grand Co., near Thompson, July 15, 2001

Phenological observation:
First Flower, Seed or Fruit Dispersal

Distribution Area:



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (plants.usda.gov)