



What do I need to know about the Plant ID Project?



What is it?

The Plant ID Project is a requirement for certification as a Master Gardener within the Vancouver Island Master Gardener Association (VIMGA). This project can be completed anytime during the 2 year training period. It involves researching and documenting the morphological characteristics and environmental requirements of each plant. All plants must be able to be grown outdoors on the West Coast. Other than the adjacent criteria, choice of plants is left to the intern.

- 5 - Trees ... 2 deciduous, 2 evergreen, 1 native tree**
 - 5 - Shrubs ... 2 deciduous, 2 evergreen, 1 native**
 - 5 - Perennials ... 2 herbaceous, 2 evergreen, 1 native**
 - 5 - 2 Annuals, 2 bi-annuals, 1 native**
 - 5 - Ferns, bulbs, corms (1 must be native)**
- Note: No more than one genus/category

What is the purpose?

The purpose of this project is multi-faceted. It provides an opportunity to...

- learn more about favourite and interesting plants
- identify key morphological features for identifying different plant species
- explore and become familiar with a variety of research based websites and texts.

Each skill will help when answering the public's questions at clinic events.

What sort of information do I record?

The adjacent template lists the required information. This includes photos. Some interns take their own plant photos, while others use referenced photos from other sources. In the end, the accuracy of the information and the references are of most importance.

Name: _____

PLANT IDENTIFICATION

Family Name: _____ Note: Include the cultivar when not describing the "basic" genus/species. No cultivar is needed for native plants.

Botanical Name: _____

Common Name: _____

Plant Type: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Cultural Requirements: _____
(Soil type, Soil pH, Sun/Part Shade, etc. Winter care, Hardiness Zone)

Growth Habit and Mature Size: _____
(Height/width in metric or imperial measures)

Pruning Requirements: _____

Leaves: Describe typical characteristics

Colour/Fall Colour: _____

Arrangement: _____

Margin: _____

Blade Shape: _____

Size: _____

Flowers and Fruits: Describe typical characteristics (if applicable)

Colour: _____

Inflorescence: _____

Shape: _____

Bloom Period: _____

Size: _____

Fruit: _____

Other: _____

Pests and Diseases: _____

Additional Information: _____

References: _____

Photos: (cite reference if not your own)



Plant ID Project cont.



How do I know if I am on the right track?

This project is a learning assignment for you to become familiar with plant identification. You will be assigned a Plant ID Mentor (CMG) who will reach out to you either by phone or email. Your mentor is there to support you through the process ... so ask away. This project will be viewed only by you and your Plant ID Mentor.

Suggestions to consider...

- Begin with the list of the 25 required plant types (example below). This can also be used as a Table of Contents for your set of completed Plant IDs.
- Add plants you might be interested in exploring. (These may change as you go along, but it helps to begin with a framework.)
- Choose a plant you love, perhaps one from your garden, to complete your first Plant ID form.
- Send the completed form electronically to your Plant ID Mentor for review.
- Complete the remaining Plant IDs and send them to your Plant ID Mentor in chunks for review, e.g., trees, shrubs... This gives you the best opportunity for feedback.
- Lastly, remember to celebrate when you have completed this important project!

PLANT ID Project (getting started)		
TREES	Common Name	Scientific Name
Deciduous		
Deciduous		
Evergreen		
Evergreen		
Native		
SHRUBS		
Deciduous		
Deciduous		
Evergreen		
Evergreen		
Native		
PERENNIALS		
Herbaceous		
Herbaceous		
Evergreen		
Evergreen		
Native		
ANNUALS		
Annual		
Annual		
Bi-annual		
Bi-annual		
Native		
OTHER		
Fern		
Fern		
Bulb		
Corn		
Native		

Requirement: one or more plant in each category is Native to the Coast

COMPLETED EXAMPLES

PLANT IDENTIFICATION – VIMGA – 2024-2025 – Intern – Shrub 5 Deciduous/Native

Family Name: Rosaceae

Botanical Name: *Amelanchier alnifolia* 'Northline'

Common Name: Serviceberry or Saskatoon Berry

Plant Type: **Deciduous:** Woody Shrub with numerous main stems at or near ground level. The prolific root system creates the thicket like bushes commonly found along the sunny edges of forests or shelterbelts.

Country of Origin: **Native** or naturalized in the Pacific Northwest. Also found on the Prairies; the 'Northline' was developed by John Wallace at Beaverlodge Nursery during the 1950's and is a staple for the Prairie Shelterbelt Program.

Cultural Requirements: (Soil type, Soil pH, Sun/Part Shade, etc. Special seasonal care, Hardiness Zone)
 "Northline" Saskatoon's tolerate most soil types within a range of **pH6.0 to 7.5**. The ideal soil is a **well drained, sandy loam**. They are self-fertile, prefer **sunny locations**, and are hardy to **Zone 3**.

Growth Habit & Mature Size: (height/width in either metric or imperial measures)
 The *Amelanchier alnifolia* 'Northline' is an upright, multi-stemmed woodland shrub that can reach **10 feet in height** and achieve a **spread of 6 – 7 feet**. In the wild, Saskatoons grow in dense thickets where new plants are established from rhizomes originating from the crown of the mother plant. In orchards, crowns are **space 3 to 5ft** apart, and create a thicket-like shrub. They are self-fertile, but higher yields are possible when grown with another saskatoon.

Pruning Requirements: (Good pruning practices focus on plant health. 4D's - Removal of dead, diseased, damaged or functionally deranged material can be done at any time of the year)
 An **annual winter pruning** is needed to maintain long-term health and productivity. Regular (4D) and corrective pruning reduce the likely hood of biennial bearing. Remove suckers and lower branches, shaded and non-productive growth in the centre, and multiple-branched stems that are susceptible to breakage.
 Young plants can be lightly pruned to create an open, informal vase shape. As the shrub matures removal of larger stems every two to three years will rejuvenate the shrub and increase fruit production. Drastic thinning can be done on neglected, overcrowded specimens by cutting out the larger stems, and leaving young, strong, straight stems.




PLANT MORPHOLOGY Leaves, Flowers & Fruit

Leaves: (size, blade shape, margin, arrangement, seasonal colours)
 The **alternating** leaves are up to **2 inches long**, broadly **elliptic** with **toothed margins** mostly on the top half of the leaf. In the fall, leaves range from **yellow to glorious reds**.

Flowers: (size, shape, inflorescence, bloom period)
 The flowers come in compact clusters of **small, half inch, saucer shaped, white** flowers. The **racemes** may have 3 to 20 individual flowers each with 5 petals and 15 – 20 stamens.

Fruit: (size, shape, attributes, harvest time, storage)
 The **half inch, round** berry matures from a dull-red to purple and finally a deep almost black skin as it ripens; the berries have a sweet, slightly nutty flavour. Harvest time varies depending on heat and available moisture starting as early as late June through to mid August. Berries can be eaten fresh or frozen/processed for later use.

PESTS & DISEASES: The 'Northline' is considered to be one of the most **disease resistant** cultivars.

Additional Information: Saskatoon berries have been an emerging horticultural crop for several decades. 'Northline' is the cultivar grown at South Island Saskatoon orchard in Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island. NW of Edmonton, we grew Forestburg and Smoky. We have found the Northline berries to be every bit as good as the berries grown at our farm (OnoBerry Farm), near Onoway AB. I am looking forward to Saskatoon pie as soon as my small plot is in production.

Companion Plants: Companion planting is not usually done with these shrubs.

Images: <https://prairieshelterbeltprogram.ca/product/northline-saskatoon/> 4 images
 Saskatoon Berry Production Manual, pg 18 – Javis Blushke 1 image

References:
Online:
 Prairie Shelterbelt Program <https://prairieshelterbeltprogram.ca/product/northline-saskatoon/>

Text:
 Saskatoon Berry Production Manual, 2013, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, ISBN 978-0-7732-6101-3, pages 19, 26, 28-29, 43-59.
 Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest 3rd edition 2019, Arthur R. Kruckeberg and Linda Chalker-Scott, ISBN 978-1-77164-506-5, page 121-122
 Plants of Coastal British Columbia Revised 2004, Pojar & Mackinnon, ISBN 978-1-55105-532-9, page 72
 A-Z encyclopedia of GARDEN PLANTS Canadian Edition 2004, Editors: Christopher Bricknell & Trevor Cole ISBN 1-55363-041-6, page107

Plant ID VIMGA – Intern – Shrub 5 – Native Page 2 | 2

PLANT IDENTIFICATION: Herbaceous perennial

Family Name: Asteraceae

Botanical Name: *Leucanthemum x superbum*

Common Name: Shasta daisy

Plant Type: Herbaceous perennial

Country of Origin: Garden origin



Cultural Requirements:
 (Soil type, Soil pH, Sun/Part Shade, etc. Winter care, Hardiness Zone). Grow in average well-drained soil. Wet soil can kill the plant. Place in full sun, **though will tolerate some shade**. Hardiness Zone: Zone 5.

Growth Habit and Mature Size: Vigorous clump-forming plant with 30 cm long stems with cheerful double white flower heads with bright yellow centres. **Plant grows 90 cm tall and 60 cm wide**.
 (Height/width in metric or imperial measures)

Pruning Requirements: Deadhead as flowers fade to promote new blooms. Divide clumps in spring every 2-3 years to maintain vigour.

Leaves: Describe typical characteristics
Colour/Fall Colour: maintains its green glossy characteristics until fall
Arrangement: alternate
Margin: toothed
Blade Shape: lanceolate
Size: 8 cm in length

Flowers and Fruits: Describe typical characteristics (if applicable)
Colour: White petals with bright yellow centre
Inflorescence: Capitulum type
Shape: multiple flowers: yellow tubular in the centre, white ligulate flowers around the outside to form a disk
Bloom Period: mid spring to early September
Size: flowerhead 10-13 cm across
Fruit:
Other:

Pests and Diseases: Verticillium wilt, leaf spots and stem rots. Aphids, leaf miners, slugs, earwigs, chrysanthemum nematodes can be problems.

Additional Information: provide long-lasting summer flowers. Water-wise. Tolerates dry soil. Good for the cottage garden, rock gardens and containers. Deer and rabbit resistant.

References:
<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=244689&isprfile=0&>
<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/154281/Leucanthemum-superbum-Becky/details>
 A-Z encyclopedia of Garden Plants / Christopher Brickell, Trevor Cole, editors-in-chief. (2004). Toronto: Dorling Kindersley Limited (Canada)