

Western Snowberry *Symphoricarpos occidentalis*

Caprifoliaceae—Honeysuckle family

by Tom Reaume © 2010 Nature Manitoba

Grant: **Manitoba** 

A **deciduous shrub** 0.5–1.5 m tall by 15–50 cm wide, spreading by woody **rhizomes** 10–30 cm long by 3–10 mm thick, often forming large colonies; **roots** 1–10 cm long by 0.3–1 mm thick, branching, tan; in wet or dry grasslands, ravines, coulees, rocky hillsides and open woodlands.

● **FLOWERS** white and pink, blooming May–August; **inflorescence** of axillary curved clusters (spikes) 1–2.5 cm long by c. 15 mm wide, from 1–5 upper pairs of leaf axils; **floral branches** ascending, 10–75 cm long, opposite at the upper nodes, pale yellowish green to pinkish tan, one of the pair often longer, downy from curled ascending hairs c. 0.2 mm long, to glabrous; **peduncles** 5–11 mm long by 1–2 mm wide; **pedicels** 0–1 mm long and wide; **subtending bracts** of ovary 1, c. 2 mm long and wide, 2-lobed on one side; **subtending bracts** of pedicel 1, 3–4 mm long, glabrous and glaucous; **flower buds** reddish, 6–9 mm long by c. 2.5 mm wide; **rachis** hairless, rough from bracts; **flowers** perfect, subsessile, 2–24 per spike, each 9–12 mm wide and long (including the green ovary); **calyx** usually 5-lobed, these 0.6–1 mm long and wide, appressed, tips slightly reddish and keeled, the margins slightly ciliate, persistent on apex of fruit; **corolla** tubular, total length 6–8 mm by 3–4 mm wide, 5-lobed (4-), the lobes ascending to spreading and 3.4–5 mm long by 3–3.5 mm wide, pinkish and glabrous on the outside, whitish inside and densely hairy with white 2–3 mm long hairs for 1.5–2 mm at the base of each lobe; **stamens** 5, exserted; **filaments** with the lower 2 mm attached inside the corolla tube, the free upper white part c. 5 mm long by c. 0.4 mm wide between the corolla's lobes, hairy along the inside for 1–1.5 mm of the lower half; **anthers** 1.8–2.5 mm long, horizontal, pale yellow; **ovary** (hypanthium) green, inferior, glabrous, 3–4 mm long by c. 2.3 mm wide; **styles** 1, white, 4–7.5 mm long by c. 0.3 mm wide, exserted, white hairs up to c. 1 mm long spreading along c. 4 mm of the middle; **stigmas** 1, round, slanted, c. 0.8 mm wide; **flower to fruit** 12–13 weeks.

● **FRUIT** a drupe, berrylike, white, roundish, 5–9 mm wide by 5–7 mm long, fleshy, sessile or on a pedicel c. 1 mm long, drying to bluish black or brown, some persisting, easily removed with a twist; **subtending bracts** (of drupes) 1–3, these 1–2 mm long by c. 1 mm wide, margins ciliate with white hairs; **nutlets** 1-seeded, 2 per drupe, yellowish tan, smooth, hard, flattened on one side, convex on the other side, 2.5–4.2 mm long by 1.5–2.4 mm wide by 1–1.4 mm thick, walls c. 0.2 mm thick; **seed** filling the nutlet, grayish brown.

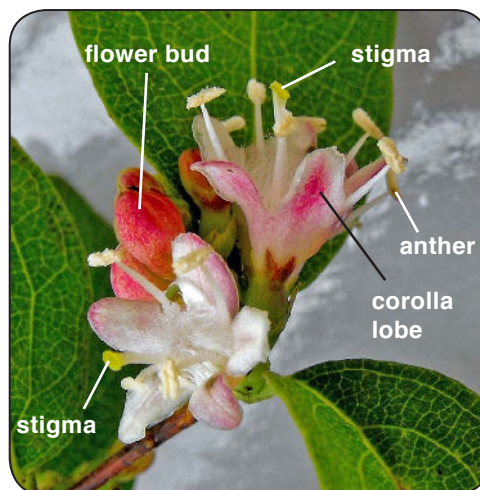
● **LEAVES** opposite, simple, entire or with up to 6 blunt teeth per side, flat, dull, lighter green beneath, mostly in the upper half of a plant, some overwintering; **blades** 1.6–8.5 cm long by 1–7.2 cm wide, thickish, glabrous to lightly hairy above and lightly hairy below (dorsally), more hairy near the base and along the midrib, hairs ascending and up to c. 0.4 mm long, veins faint, marginal hairs curved forward, margins rolled downward forming a low ridge dorsally; **petioles** hairy or not, 1–10 mm long by 1.5–2 mm wide, often curved; **stipules** absent.

● **STEM** woody below, erect, persistent, 1–4 per clump, round to angled, hollow, smooth above, light to medium brown to reddish brown; 3–12 mm thick near the rough naked base; **bark** peeling in long strips; **winter buds** opposite, glabrous, 2–3.5 mm long by 1.3–2 mm wide, 4-sided, pointed, with 3 or 4 imbricate stiff brown visible scales per side.

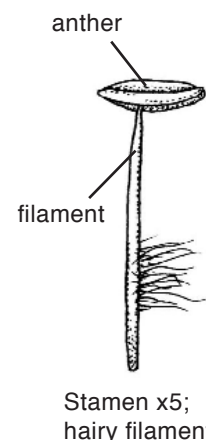
● **RANGE:** (CAN) 7 provinces; (USA) 27 states; a **native**.



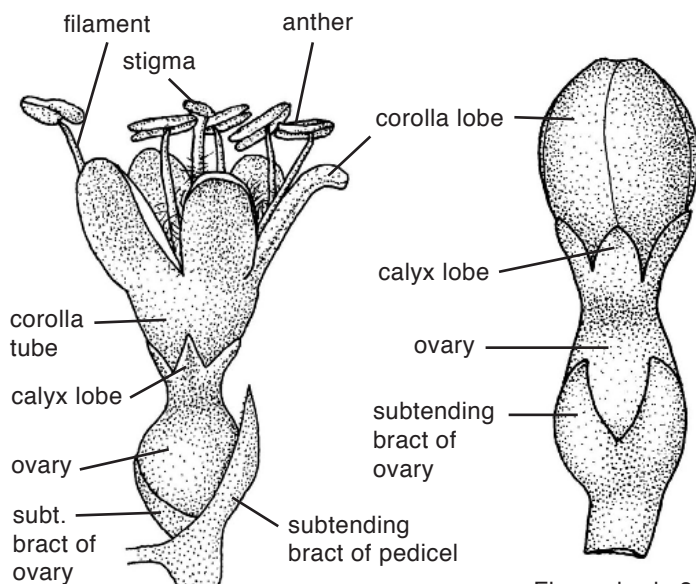
Part of a large Western Snowberry colony with the terminal flowers open; along a railway bank leading to Omand's Creek in Winnipeg, Manitoba



Two open terminal flowers and reddish flower buds at top of new twig

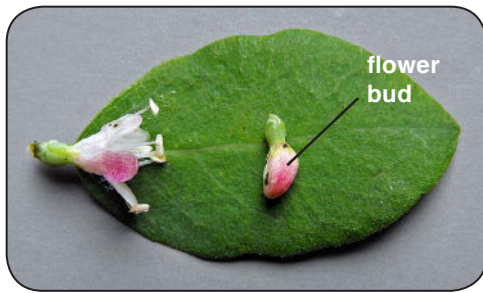


Stamen x5;
hairy filament

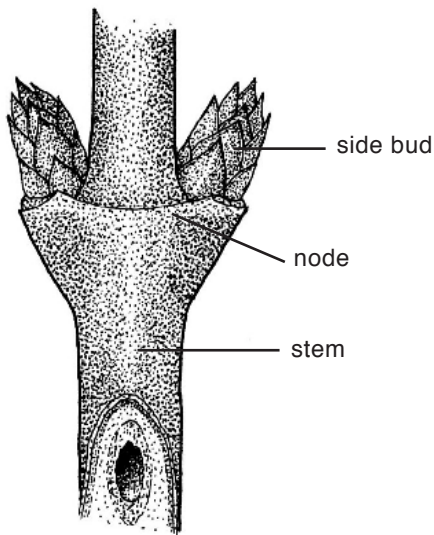


Flower x4; side

Flower bud x8;
side



Western Snowberry leaf blade with flower
c. 13 mm long and flower bud



Hollow stem x4; node with
opposite scaly side buds



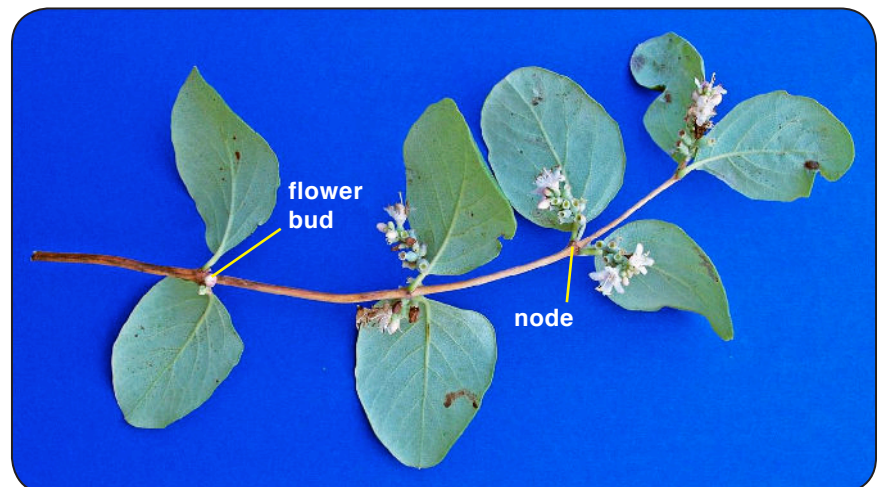
Upper plant 74 cm long with flowers and dark blue
older fruit from last year; leaf blades c. 5 cm long



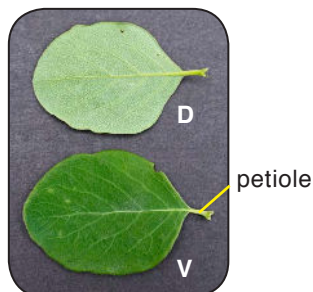
Lower stem 8 mm wide;
bark peeling



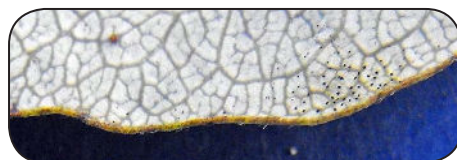
Moth on flower in morning



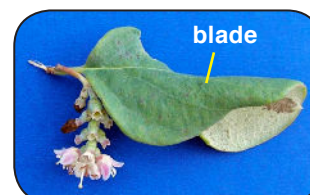
Floral branch from below with flowers and opposite leaves at the top 4 nodes



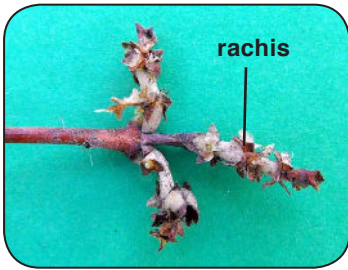
Leaves 6 cm long;
Dorsal side; Ventral
side



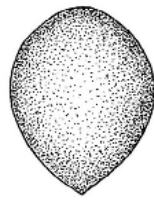
Leaf margin; dorsal side



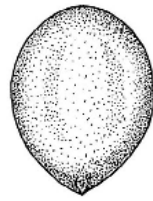
Leaf 7 cm long;
spike below with
flowers at its tip



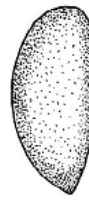
Rough rachis from bracts after fruit has fallen



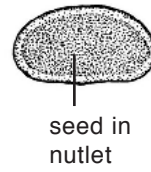
convex



flat, grooved



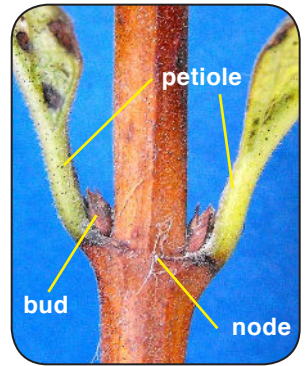
thick



seed in nutlet

cross-section

Nutlet x10; two per drupe



Twig with opposite leaves and buds at a node



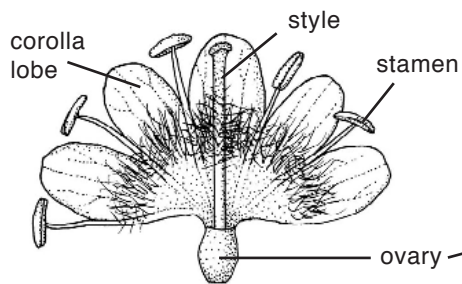
Western Snowberry fruit (drupes) 5–7 mm wide; whitish in the fall



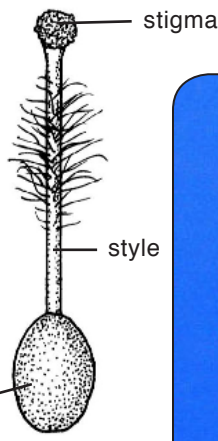
A spike 2 cm long with apical flowers and ripening green fruit



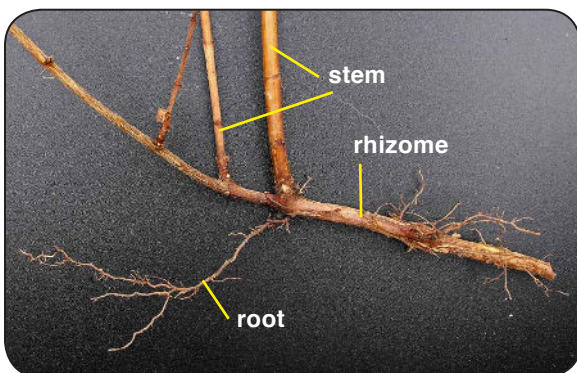
Flowers and buds with last year's dark fruit above & behind



Open flat corolla x3; showing 1 pistil, 5 stamens and 5 lobes



Pistil x5



Rhizome c. 6 mm thick with tan roots and 2 stems



Upper stem with new white fruit and black year-old fruit