

Washington Flora Checklist

A checklist of the Vascular Plants of Washington State Hosted by the University of Washington Herbarium

Family: Sarcobataceae

1 terminal taxa (species, subspecies, and varieties).

The Washington Flora Checklist aims to be a complete list of the native and naturalized vascular plants of Washington State, with current classifications, nomenclature and synonymy.

Taxa included in the checklist:

- Native taxa whether extant, extirpated, or extinct.
- Exotic taxa that are naturalized, escaped from cultivation, or persisting wild.
- Waifs (e.g., ballast plants, escaped crop plants) and other scarcely collected exotics.
- Interspecific hybrids that are frequent or self-maintaining.
- Some unnamed taxa in the process of being described.

Family classifications follow [APG IV](#) for angiosperms, PPG I (J. Syst. Evol. 54:563-603. 2016.) for pteridophytes, and Christenhusz et al. (Phytotaxa 19:55-70. 2011.) for gymnosperms, with a few exceptions. Nomenclature and synonymy at the rank of genus and below follows the [2nd Edition of the Flora of the Pacific Northwest](#) except where superseded by new information.

Accepted names are indicated with **blue type**, synonyms with **gray type**.

Native species and infraspecies are marked with **bold-face type**.

*Non-native and introduced taxa are preceded by an asterisk.

Please note: This is a working checklist, continuously updated. Use it at your discretion.

Created from the Washington Flora Checklist database on April 1st, 2025 at 11:50am PT.
Available online at <https://burkeherbarium.org/waflora/>

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Dicots:

Sarcobataceae [HC2, IMF2A] Greasewood Family

Molecular evidence indicates that *Sarcobatus* is more closely related to Nyctaginaceae and Phytolaccaceae than to Amaranthaceae (which includes Chenopodiaceae in our taxonomy).

Sarcobatus [FNA4, HC, HC2]

Reise Nord-Amer. 1: 510. 1839.
greasewood

Sarcobatus vermiculatus (Hook.) Torr. [FNA4, HC, HC2]

Not. Milit. Recon. 149. 1848.
greasewood

Batis vermiculata Hook.

Fremontia vermiculata (Hook.) Torr.

Sarcobatus maximilianii Nees

FNA4: "Reports of *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* from British Columbia and Texas have not been verified by us. One of the most common of western North American shrubs in alkaline habitats, *S. vermiculatus* grows among other shrubs or in pure stands, often to great extent, especially in the Great Basin. It is frequently codominant with *Allenrolfea* in areas that support little else. Other, less alkali-tolerant associates may include species of *Artemisia* (even *A. tridentata*), *Atriplex*, *Chrysothamnus*, *Grayia*, *Krascheninnikovia*, *Larrea*, and *Suaeda*. *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* ranks among the important western browse plants, but it has a dark side. Range animals and wildlife feed on it; the plant's saline taste perhaps enhances its palatability. Under certain conditions, poisoning of animals, especially sheep, may result from the plant's content of sodium and potassium oxalates (10-22% of plant dry weight). Death may occur when sheep eat large amounts of *S. vermiculatus*---and little or nothing else---in a short time. A notable mass poisoning of sheep occurred in 1920 when 1700 ewes in transit were unloaded and allowed to browse in a pure stand of *S. vermiculatus*. The next morning 1000 were dead (J. M. Kingsbury 1964). *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* is allegedly a phreatophyte; its taproots are said to be able to penetrate as much as 57 feet below the surface. Large communities of greasewood coincide with areas where the water table is less than 15 feet below the surface, although the plant can survive with water table depth to 25 feet (H. N. Mozingo 1987)."