# California Phenology Project: species profile for Common snowberry (Symphoricarpos albus)



CPP site(s) where this species is monitored: John Muir National Historic Site



### What does this species look like?

This deciduous shrub or tree is densely branched and grows between 0.6 to 1.8 meters tall. It can form thickets with creeping underground stems. The small but showy flowers are white to pink and have both male and female parts. These flowers occur in small clusters of 8 to 16 along the stems and are insectpollinated. The round fruit is 8 to 12 mm long.

When monitoring this species, use the USA-NPN deciduous trees and shrubs datasheet.

Photo credit Gertrud K (flickr)

### Species facts!

- The CPP four letter code for this species is SYAL.
- Native Americans used this species medicinally and for arrowshafts, brooms, and shampoo.
- The berries can be toxic to humans, causing vomiting and dizziness.
- The berries are an important food source for birds and mammals. The floral nectar is an important resource for butterflies and moths.
- Re-sprouts from spreading rhizomes easily after fires.



Photo credit: onok (flickr)



Photo credit: Lil worlf (flickr)

## Where is this species found?

- Favors well-drained, moist, fertile soils but also will grow on dry or rocky soils.
- Found in shady woods, streambanks, and northern slopes.
- Occurs at elevations less than 1200 meters.
- Naturally distributed throughout northwest, central-western, and southwestern California as well as north through Alaska and throughout Western U.S.
- Naturalized species in the Eastern U.S.

For more information about phenology and the California Phenology Project (CPP), please visit the CPP website (www.usanpn.org/cpp) and the USA-NPN website (www.usanpn.org)

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Breaking leaf buds



Leaves



Increasing leaf size



#### **Colored** leaves



Flowers or flower buds When monitoring flower or flower bud abundance for this species, count each inflorescence as a single flowering structure! For example, if there are two inflorescences with many flowers or buds each, then abundance should be recorded as <3.



**Open flowers** Do you see the anthers or ctiama? **Propartian of an** 

stigma? **Proportion of open flowers** should be recorded at the scale of individual flowers, not inflorescences (i.e. estimate the proportion of individual flowers that are open )!

**Note**: flower phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "open flowers" you should also record **Y** to "flowers or flower buds"



*Fruits* The fruit is berry-like and changes from green to white.



**Ripe fruits** A fruit is considered ripe

when it has turned white.

**Note**: fruit phenophases are nested; if you record **Y** for "ripe fruits" you should also record **Y** to "fruits"

Phenophases not pictured: Falling leaves, Recent fruit or seed drop