



## Plants for Birds

### Woods' Rose (Western Wild Rose)

- **Scientific Name:** *Rosa woodsii* (Rosacea family)
- **Height:** 2ft to 6ft
- **Hardiness:** Zone 3
- **Wildlife Value:** Rose hips provide food for birds and mammals and pollen attracts bees.

A favorite of many native plant lovers, Woods' Rose is found throughout the western United States and Rocky Mountains. It produces highly fragrant pale to deep rose-colored flowers, red prickled stems and orange-red fruits called hips which persist on the plant into late winter. When snow covers the ground, the dry fruits provide sustaining energy and protein to many birds and mammals including grouse, thrushes, grosbeaks, waxwings, chipmunks, rabbits, and deer. The foliage is essential cover for a variety of birds and the lovely flowers are thick with pollen attracting beneficial pollinators, especially bumblebees.

Woods' Rose is adapted to a wide range of moisture, however it's mainly considered an upland plant and is a pioneer on disturbed sites such as roadsides, land-cuts, fills and fence rows. It is found on grassy slopes, meadows, clearings, prairie

sandhills and riverbanks and also grows as an understory species in cottonwood, fir, and ponderosa pine forests.

*Rosa woodsii* flowers from June to August, producing fruits in August with the reddish hips remaining on the plant into the winter. It grows more vigorously and makes more fruit when grown in full sun but tolerates shade very well. If given enough shade it remains a smallish understory plant. In full sun it can grow to six feet and sometimes forms dense thickets, but it can be held at any size with pruning. Woods' Rose grows best in a well-drained clay loam or sandy soil. Its extensive rhizomes and hardiness make it excellent for erosion control and use as a revegetation species.

When deciding where to plant Woods' Rose, be sure to take into consideration the plant's tendency to spread via rhizomes. Woods' Rose is usually best in wilder gardens along the edges of properties. It makes a dense hedge or serves as a great understory plant in a native border garden where it is free to spread under a canopy of trees and large shrubs.

Woods' Rose is easy to grow, has low water requirements, and attracts birds, pollinators and mammals making it a wonderful addition to a bird-friendly garden. You can also treat yourself to a vitamin-C filled tea from the hips or dress up your salad with some edible rose petals.

- Paulette Epple & Leslie Eddington