



ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM

PLANT CARE INFORMATION


Sumac

Rhus species

DESCRIPTION: Some of the species are densely branched evergreen shrubs with leathery, usually dark green foliage: Evergreen Sumac (*Rhus virens*), Little-leaf Desert Sumac (*Rhus microphylla*), and Kearney Sumac (*Rhus kearneyi*). Others are deciduous with good autumn color: Skunkbush (*Rhus aromatica*), Sumac (*Rhus hartmannii*), and Smooth Sumac (*Rhus glabra*). Grow rates are usually moderate. The various species are native to the semiarid and arid habitats of the Southwest and northern Mexico. Skunkbush and Smooth Sumac are among the smaller, reaching 6' tall or so; the former making a wide mound and the latter upright wands. Other sumacs become even larger; Evergreen, Kearney, and Littleleaf Sumacs attain a height of about 10 feet tall while *Rhus hartmannii* can reach 15' tall. The flowers and fruit of all are noticeable but not very showy.

RECOMMENDED USES: All but Smooth Sumac make a good dense screen or background for other plants.

CULTURE:

 **Hardiness:** Most are hardy to probably 0° F. We're not sure how hardy *R. hartmannii* is, though it has made it through mid-teens with no problems.



Sun tolerance: Most prefer full sun. Smooth Sumac and Skunkbush will perform satisfactorily in partial shade.



Watering and feeding: Give sumacs infrequent but regular waterings through the warm season. Feeding is not necessary.



Soil requirements: Any well drained soil is tolerated. At least some species are susceptible to Texas root rot.



Pruning: As needed to control. Consider the ultimate size when planting to reduce pruning needs.