

Rosaceae—Rose family

Sorbaria sorbifolia (L.) A. Braun

false spirea

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Synonyms. *Spiraea sorbifolia* L., *Schizonotus sorbifolius* (L.) Lindl.

Other common names. Ural false spirea.

Growth habit, occurrence, and use. False spirea—*Sorbaria sorbifolia* (L.) A. Braun—is native to northern Asia from the Urals to Kamchatka, Sakhalin, and Japan. It is a deciduous shrub from 1 to 3 m tall, usually grown as an ornamental for its bright-green foliage and conspicuous panicles of white flowers (Krüssman 1960; LHBH 1976; Rehder 1940; Schnelle 1990); the species is also useful for watershed protection and wildlife habitat. It is 1 of about 8 species native to northern and eastern Asia (Rehder 1940; Rosendahl 1955). False spirea often escapes from cultivation in the eastern United States.

Flowering and fruiting. The shiny, white, bisexual flowers bloom in May, June, and July in the northern United States (Rehder 1940; Rosendahl 1955). The fruits are small shiny follicles that ripen in August in Minnesota (Rehder 1940; Rosendahl 1955; Rudolf 1974). Good seed crops are borne almost every year (Rudolf 1974). Seeds are small and fusiform (figure 1).

Collection, cleaning, and storage. The ripe fruits should be picked from the bushes by hand and separated from the panicles. The fruits may be kneaded in a bag or rubbed to break them up and then fanned carefully to separate the seeds from the debris. Rudolf (1974) reported that there were about 416,750 dried follicles/kg (189,000/lb) and about 1,667,000 seeds/kg (756,000/lb). No data on seed purity or soundness are available. Seeds may be stored dry in sealed containers at 1 to 5 EC if they are to be held longer than overwinter. Duration of viability under these conditions is not known, but the seeds appear to be orthodox in storage behavior, making a long duration probable.

Germination. Apparently, some of the seeds have internal dormancy and it is suggested that they be stratified in a moist medium for 30 to 60 days at 1 to 5 EC. Germination test data are unavailable, but it is suggested that tests be made in germinators or sand flats, using pretreated seeds at a temperature of about 20 EC (night) to 30 (day) EC for 40 days. Seeds should be sown immediately after collection in the late summer or stratified seeds used in the spring (Swingle 1939). The seeds should be covered only lightly with soil (LHBH 1976).

References

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Figure 1—*Sorbaria sorbifolia*, false spirea: longitudinal section through a seed, H24.