JUNIPERUS COMMUNIS L.
Ground Juniper

FAMILY: Cupressaceae

HABIT: Usually a decumbent evergreen shrub, rarely arborescent.

SIMILAR SPECIES: Both varieties occur in Ohio. Juniperus communis var. depressa Pursh is easily recognized by its habit of forming cup- or saucer-shaped mats. The arborescent var. communis is rare and local throughout its range and may be confused with juvenile forms of Juniperus virginiana. J. communis var. communis has leaves all needle-like, whereas J. virginiana has leaves mostly scale-like.

TOTAL RANGE: Circumboreal, s. in America to PA, WI, MN, the Rocky Mountain States, and irregularly in SC and s. IN.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Summit counties. Pre-1980 records are from Clinton, Erie, Lorain, Lucas, Montgomery, Portage, and Warren counties.

HABITAT: Occurs in a wide variety of open to semi-open situations: sandy shores, dunes, gravelly banks, oak-hickory woods, pastures, and old fields.

HAZARDS: Overshading by woody species as a result of succession.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Presumed excellent due to its variety of habitat. Various forms of this species are cultivated as ornamentals.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: When found, an attempt should be made to determine if the occurrence is native or is an escape from ornamental plantings.

COMMENTS: The current knowledge of the range of this species in Ohio probably is accurate. It is unlikely to be overlooked or misidentified. Braun (1961) reports it from 4 additional counties: Ashtabula, Defiance, Lake, and Wayne. There is some doubt as to the indigenous nature of some of these populations.

SELECTED REFERENCES:


Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Created: 2/1984 James Burns