



Ericameria nauseosa rubber rabbitbrush

Capitol Reef National Park

Why Observe?

Ericameria nauseosa is adapted to cold, dry environments receiving 7 to 18 inches of precipitation per year. The leaves, flowers, and seeds are a food source for deer, elk, small mammals, and birds. It also provides cover for small mammals and birds and attracts pollinators like butterflies and small bees. It is tolerant of coarse, alkaline soils and is useful in soil stabilization and restoration of disturbed areas.



Tips for Identification

Ericameria nauseosa is a perennial shrub, native to western North America. It grows 1 to 8 feet tall and has yellowish-green stems originating from its base. Its narrow leaves are 0.75 to 2.75 inches long. Flowers are yellow, tubular, and 0.25 to 0.4 inches long. Flowers bloom August to October. This species includes a number of varieties (ecotypes) which can look quite variable.

Some ecotypes are infected by stem galls caused by tephritid flies that lay eggs in the stems of *Ericameria nauseosa*. Some galls appear as white, cottony balls, while others appear as green flower-like growths.



Be aware there is variation from individual to individual within a species, so your plant may not look exactly like the one pictured. If you are uncertain whether or not a phenophase is occurring, report a “?” for its status until it becomes clear what you are observing after subsequent visits.

Different types of stem galls caused by flies. These do not correspond to any phenophase.

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Young leaves

One or more young, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "young" and "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf stalk (petiole) or leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the stem, but before the leaf has reached full size or turned the darker green color or tougher texture of mature leaves on the plant. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.



Leaves

One or more live, unfolded leaves are visible on the plant. A leaf is considered "unfolded" once its entire length has emerged from a breaking bud, stem node or growing stem tip, so that the leaf stalk (petiole) or leaf base is visible at its point of attachment to the stem. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves.



Colored leaves

One or more leaves show some of their typical late-season color, or yellow or brown due to drought or other stresses. Do not include small spots of color due to minor leaf damage, or dieback on branches that have broken. Do not include fully dried or dead leaves that remain on the plant.



Flowers or flower buds

One or more fresh open or unopened flowers or flower buds are visible on the plant. Include flower buds or inflorescences that are swelling or expanding, but do not include those that are tightly closed and not actively growing (dormant). Also do not include wilted or dried flowers.



Open flowers

One or more open, fresh flowers are visible on the plant. Flowers are considered "open" when the reproductive parts (male stamens or female pistils) are visible between or within unfolded or open flower parts (petals, floral tubes or sepals). Do not include wilted or dried flowers.



Fruits

One or more fruits are visible on the plant. For *Ericameria nauseosa*, the fruit is very tiny and seed-like and is crowded into a spent flower head. The seed-like fruit changes from yellow to tan or brown and drops from the plant. Do not include empty flower heads that have already dropped all of their fruits.



Ripe fruits

One or more ripe fruits are visible on the plant. For *Ericameria nauseosa*, the fruit is considered ripe when it has turned tan or brown, or when it readily drops from the spent flower head when touched. Do not include empty flower heads that have already dropped all of their fruits.



Recent fruit or seed drop

One or more mature fruits or seeds have dropped or been removed from the plant since your last visit. Do not include obviously immature fruits that have dropped before ripening, such as heavy rain or wind, or empty fruits that had long ago dropped all of their seeds but remained on the plant.

Phenophases not pictured: Falling leaves