

Eurotia lanata

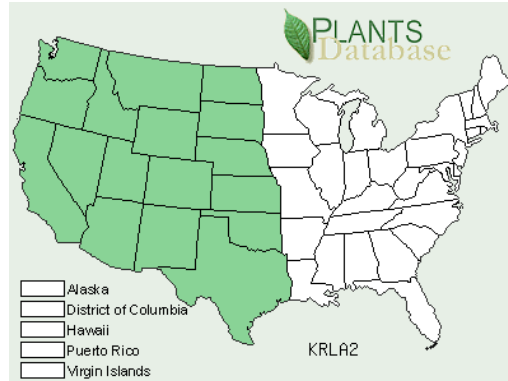
(common name - Winterfat)

Description

Eurotia lanata is a perennial plant in the family Chenopodiaceae (1). It has many synonyms including *Ceratoides lanata*, *Krascheninnikovia lanata* (1), white sage, and winterfat (2). Winterfat is an evergreen shrub generally growing from one to three feet tall and has a one to three foot spread (3). It is light silvery-green in color with fine, furry leaves, and white flowers (3). When the seeds form on the female plants, they have silky hairs, (3) which give the plant a cotton-like appearance (2) (see picture below).

Distribution

Winterfat is native to the United States and can be found in habitats all across the West (see map to right). It is found in plant communities such as creosote bush, shadscale scrub, and pinyon- juniper



The distribution of *Eurotia lanata* in the United States (1)



White, fluffy seeds of *Eurotia lanata* (1)

REFERENCES

- 1 <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=KRLA2>
- 2 http://www.hort.usu.edu/PlantGuide/html/Shrubs_and_Trees/Ceratoides_lanata.htm
- 3 <http://www.unps.org/plant%20data%20base/plant%20sheets/winterfat.html>
- 4 <http://www.laspilatas.com/plants/305.htm>
- 5 <http://www.nps.gov/archive/mojia/devaplan/affnat.htm>
- 6 [http://links.istor.org/sici?sci=0038-4909\(19710220\)15%3A3%3C371%3AFSOELG%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q](http://links.istor.org/sici?sci=0038-4909(19710220)15%3A3%3C371%3AFSOELG%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q)

shrublands (4). Winterfat's success may be due to its drought and cold tolerance and because it thrives in infertile, sandy soils (3). It is the dominant shrub on the winter desert ranges in the Intermountain West because of this preference fine soils that drain well (3).

Ecological Information

Winterfat is named because it is nutritious forage for livestock on the winter range (3). It is also an important food source to other animals, such as the Mohave desert squirrel, during dry years (5). The overlapping winter diets of the Mohave tree squirrel and livestock, primarily sheep, could be a factor in the Mohave tree squirrel's threatened status along with loss of habitat due to agriculture.

Winterfat is also known to be fairly tolerant to saline soils (3). However, there may be genetic variations within some of the species which some more tolerant to saline soils than others (6). This conclusion was found by Clark and West (6), who noted that seed germination generally decreased as salt levels increase for Winterfat, however there was variation in the percent of seeds germinated dependent on the source of the seeds. This suggests some of *Eurotia lanata* may be more saline resistant than others.