

Nature Notes

Common Juniper



Bush-whacking through a clump of Common Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) can be an unpleasant experience with bare legs. The very sharp, short leaves that grow in whorls of 3 on this sprawling plant definitely encourage people to walk elsewhere.



Photo Wikipedia: *Juniperus communis*

'Common' is a good descriptor of this plant that is found throughout Canada and is the only circumpolar conifer in the Northern Hemisphere. Juniper is able to occupy this wide range because of its ability to survive in habitats ranging from dry slopes to wet muskeg and from lowlands to alpine tundra. This adaptability makes juniper sought after for such uses as landscaping and slope stabilization.

Juniper berries might be best known as the flavour of gin but they have long been used for a variety of purposes, including medicinal, food flavouring and cleansing purposes.

Because this hardy shrub can be

found in so many habitats, there is a good chance of successfully finding a common juniper in just about any part of the Kimberley Nature Park.



Photo D Powell, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Visit www.kimberleynaturepark.ca for a hard copy or more information about Nature Park events.