

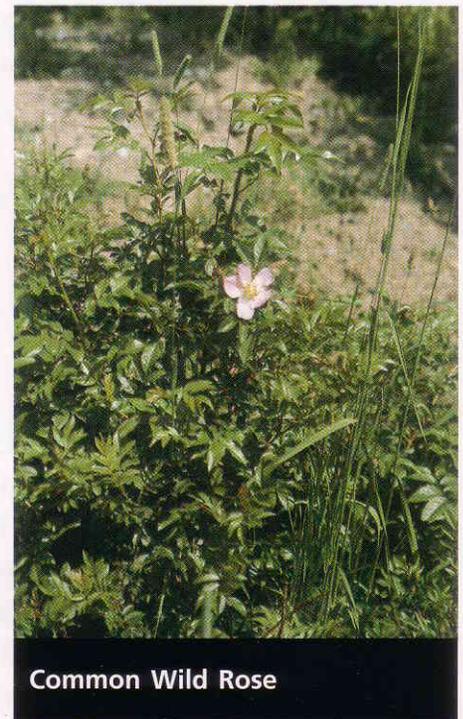

Lowbush Blueberry Fact Sheet

Common Wild Rose

Rosa virginiana Mill.
Other names: Virginia rose

Description

This perennial, shrubby plant has stout and branched stems growing up to 2m high, although it does not reach this height in wild lowbush blueberry fields. The upper branches are smooth except for scattered thorns. These thorns are stout, flattened at the base and somewhat curved. The leaves are compound and divided into 7 or 9 dark green, shiny leaflets. The leaflets are oblong (2-4 times as long as wide with parallel sides) to oval (often more than half as wide as long), with coarse teeth along the margin. The flowers, with pink petals and many yellow stamens in the centre, are solitary or in small clusters and are 5-8 cm in diameter. The plant does not flower in its first year of growth. The fruit is a bright red, many seeded, berry-like rose hip. This plant is extremely variable in all characteristics.



Common Wild Rose

Economic Importance

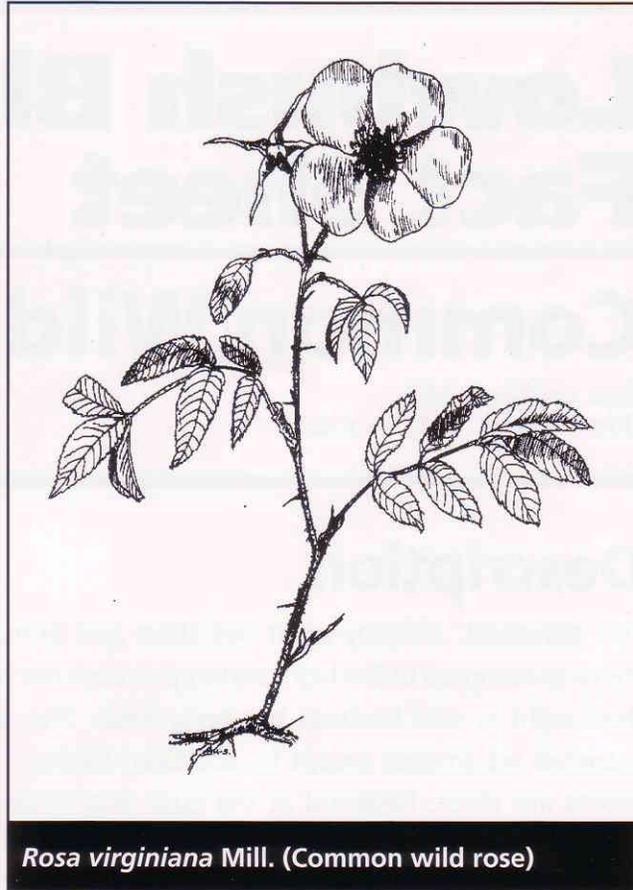
Common wild rose is the most common of the wild rose species occurring in wild lowbush blueberry fields. It is found in old, dry fields or in damp, moist areas, often around rock piles or along the edges of fields. The species has a high acid tolerance and it is shade intolerant. It grows more vigorously and produces more fruit in full sunlight than shade. Therefore, conditions in lowbush blueberry fields can be ideal for its growth. The plant spreads vegetatively by underground rootstocks and can be found growing in clumps in blueberry fields and it spreads rapidly after disturbance. Intense burns may kill the root stocks but mowing allows the plant to regenerate from its rootstock and may result in an increase in the size of clumps. This species is not expected to reduce yields within blueberry fields, but it can make harvesting difficult.





Life Cycle

Common wild rose is a long-lived perennial shrub that reproduces by seed as well as from underground rootstocks. Spring regrowth occurs in mid to late May, with the plants producing flowers in July. Seeds are produced in late summer and are dispersed by small mammals, song birds and grouse. The seeds may require a considerable after-ripening period (2 years), but once they germinate, the vigorously growing seedlings produce a large root system. Plants originating from seed generally do not produce flowers and seeds until the second year of growth. Plants originating from the rootstocks may flower and set seed in the first year of growth or wait until the second year.



Control Strategy

Common wild rose is resistant to 2,4-D and is not controlled by currently registered applications of hexazinon (Velpar™/Pronone™). Therefore, it can be a difficult weed to control in blueberries. Light to moderate burns stimulate vegetative reproduction although more intense burns may kill the rootstock and reduce the abundance of the weed. The intense burns, however, may remove the duff layer and expose the mineral soil, providing a good seed bed for germination of common wild rose seed. Populations may then be reestablished. Mowing will result in regeneration of the weed from its rootstocks. Localized patches of this weed should be treated with spot applications of herbicide such as glyphosate (ROUNDUP™) as soon as they are noticed to prevent their persistence and spread. Periodic, intense burns in mowed fields that are known to have problems with this weed may reduce wild rose densities.

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