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Alnus rugosa

[Synonyms : *Alnus glauca*, *Alnus incana* var. *americana*, *Alnus incana* subsp. *rugosa*, *Alnus rugosa* var. *americana*, *Alnus serrulata*, *Betula alnus* var. *rugosa*]

SMOOTH ALDER is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to northern and eastern North America and to Europe, it has long male catkins.

It is also known as Alder, American alder, Black alder, Common alder, Gray alder, Green alder, *Hasselal* (Swedish), Hazel alder, Hoary alder, Notch-leaved alder, *Olše svraskalá* (Czech), Red alder, Speckled alder, Swamp alder, and Tag alder.

It is pollinated by the wind.

Rugosa is Latin (wrinkled).

The North American Cherokee Indians used to make a hot decoction of the inner bark to cause vomiting, and they also used different parts of smooth alder to treat a range of ailments including period and labour pains, fever, jaundice, piles, coughs, some skin ailments, eye problems, indigestion, some heart disorders, blood pressure, kidney ailments, oral problems, swellings and toothache. The Menominee also included smooth alder in their range of medicinal infusions.

The tree has been found invaluable for regenerating woodland as it grows quickly and provides shelter for slower, more permanent trees to establish themselves. It also has the advantage that its root system can offer support to banks susceptible to erosion.

The bark is the source of varying shades of brown dye.

Medicinally, the bark has been used by North American herbalists in particular for treating indigestion and stomach upsets.