FIELD NOTES

Dr. Harrison L. Flint

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Russian peashrub grows on the Iowa State University campus in Ames (above). It produces yellow flowers in spring (right).

Caragana frutex

Russian peashrub (*Caragana frutex*) is worthy of greater use in the Upper Midwest and Great Plains, where Siberian peashrub (*C. arborescens*) has performed well. Native from southern Russia to Siberia and hardy to Zone 3, Russian peashrub is shorter than the better-known Siberian peashrub, growing to 6 to 8 feet tall and 10 feet wide.

In addition, it has larger flowers and darker green foliage than Siberian peashrub. The bright butter yellow, pea-shaped flowers grow to 1 inch long and appear in May and June. They also attract hummingbirds. Each leaf consists of four leaflets, which have a smooth upper surface and measure about ¾-inch long.

According to the late Dr. Donald Hoag of North Dakota State University, Fargo, in his book "Trees and Shrubs for the Northern Plains," (North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, Fargo, 1965), Russian peashrub is also apparently more resistant to insect attack than *C. arborescens*.

This plant's only disadvantage — its strong tendency to sucker — is a problem when it is used as a specimen. However, when used in mass plantings with turf maintained to the base of the plants, this suckering tendency is not a serious problem.

Suckers developing within the shrub add to its fullness; those that develop outside the plant's perimeter can be removed during routine mowing. Drastic renewal pruning, which requires cutting back all branches close to the ground, may occasionally be needed for long-established plants and should be performed when plants are dormant.

The shrubs growing on the Iowa State University campus in Ames appear fuller and more showy in flower than other Russian peashrub plants we have seen. We are not sure whether this effect is due to genetics or to the site on which the shrubs are growing.

Russian peashrub is easily propagated from seed, which can be scarified mechanically or by using sulfuric acid and then soaking them in water for 24 hours. We have collected seeds from the population on the ISU campus. Seed samples are available from ISU's North Central Plant Introduction Station in Ames at no charge upon written request.

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If you have C. frutex in stock and you sell wholesale, see page 7.

Readers are invited to submit articles on plants they think should be used more. Contributors will be paid $25 per item used. For details, write The Editor, American Nurseryman, 111 N. Canal St., Suite 545, Chicago, IL 60606-7276.