



## Landscaping with Native Plants, Preventing Stormwater Runoff, and Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat by Emily Bishton © 2021



### 1) Why Use Native Plants in Your Garden?

- Native plants thrive in our weather pattern of wet winters and dry summers, and in our native soils.
- Many native plants are very ornamental with year-round interest.
- Their versatility of form, color, and bloom means that native plants can blend well into your existing landscape, or can be used as the primary plants in a brand new garden.
- Most native plants will thrive in a wide variety of sun and soil conditions without large amounts of supplemental water or fertilizer, and require less pruning or fussing, resulting in a less time and money needed for maintenance.
- The root systems of many native plants have slope-holding characteristics, which help control or eliminate erosion and runoff from your garden.
- Overall, native plants are much less susceptible to pests and diseases.
- They also provide the most reliable food source for native birds and beneficial insects, which if attracted to your garden will reduce pest insects and weeds, and improve the health of all the plants there.

### 2) Design tips for using native plants (additional tips included in the following plant list pages):

- Add evergreen native groundcovers underneath your existing deciduous trees and shrubs for more winter interest.
- Add deciduous native trees on the south or west sides of your home for summer shade and reduced cooling bills, while maintaining light during winter months.
- Add evergreen native trees or large shrubs where you want a privacy screen or wind buffer.
- Add evergreen native shrubs in or above sloped areas, to “slow, spread, and sink” rainfall and reduce erosion.

### Resources for choosing native plants for your garden conditions, wildlife benefits, and stormwater prevention:

- Snohomish Co. Natural Yard Care: <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/1097/Natural-Yard-Care>
- Snohomish Conservation District: <https://snohomishcd.org/>
- Washington Native Plant Society: <https://www.wnps.org>
- King County Native Plant Resources, Native Plant Nursery List, and Native Plant Guide: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/stewardship/nw-yard-and-garden/native-plant-resources-nw.aspx>
- Washington State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Backyard Habitat Program: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/backyard>
- Snohomish Co. Rainscaping Program: <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/4149/RainScaping>
- 12,000 Rain Gardens Program, including WSU Rain Garden handbook: <https://www.12000-rain-gardens/.org>

**Favorite Native Plants** © Emily Bishton 2021

**Groundcovers, Low Shrubs, and Perennials (\*asterisk indicates a root system that helps stabilize slopes)**

Name	Height x Width	Wildlife Value	Landscape Aesthetic, Practicality, and Care
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnickinnick)*	1 ft tall x spreading	Nectar feeds bees and butterflies, fruit feeds grosbeaks, sparrows and other ground feeding birds.	Evergreen, fine-textured, leaves turn reddish in fall and winter. Once established, thrives in hot, dry, sandy conditions without supplemental water. Needs little or no pruning, and has erosion- control root system. In heavy soils, 'Vancouver Jade' and 'Massachusetts' are resistant to fungal diseases.
Aster subspicatus (Douglas Aster)* and A. chilensis (Pacific Aster)*	3 ft tall clumps can also spread by rhizomes	Nectar feeds bees and butterflies, especially our native skippers, and seeds feed goldfinches, sparrows and other ground-feeding birds	Thrives in full sun, but will bloom in part shade also. Covered with lavender-colored flowers in late summer and fall, and is low-water-use in all soil conditions once established.
Gaultheria shallon (Salal)*	3-5 ft tall and wide, spreads by rhizomes	Leaves used by butterflies, fruit eaten by towhees, juncos, sparrows, and other ground feeding birds.	Evergreen, lush, deep green leaves held in layers on branches. Grows well in part-sun or shade, with little or no supplemental water once established. Can easily be kept smaller by thinning some canes to the ground each spring, or cutting whole patch to the ground every 5 years. Erosion-controlling roots.
Mahonia nervosa (Low Oregon Grape)*	2 ft tall and wide, spreads slowly by rhizomes	Nectar feeds hummingbirds and butterflies, berries feed robins, flickers, sparrows, towhee, jays, etc. Good summer and winter shelter for small birds.	Evergreen, blue-green leaves, with reddish winter tint on edges. Fragrant flowers. Shade-loving, and can thrive in dry shade once established. Erosion-controlling roots. Needs little or no pruning.
Mahonia repens*	Same as M. nervosa	Same as M. nervosa above	Same qualities as M. nervosa above, <i>except that it thrives in sun or part sun.</i>
Blechnum spicant (Deer Fern)	3 ft tall and wide	Good year-round shelter for ground-feeding birds and beneficial insects.	Evergreen, delicate-looking, thrives in part sun or shade. Central fronds are vertical, and give the plant a flowering appearance. Moderate supplemental watering needed once established.
Polystichum munitum (Sword Fern)*	4-5 ft tall and wide	Good year-round shelter for ground-feeding birds and beneficial insects.	Sturdy, evergreen foliage creates lush woodland effect. Thrives in most garden conditions, from dry shade to moist sun. Fronds can be pruned to the crown each year for tidy look in focal point areas, or pruned every 2-5 years or more in back borders.

### Medium Shrubs

Name	Hgt x Width	Wildlife Value	Landscape Aesthetic, Practicality, and Care
Amelanchier alnifolia (Serviceberry)	8-15 ft tall and wide	Nectar feeds adult butterflies, and foliage feeds butterfly larvae. Fruit eaten by multiple birds.	Beautiful white spring flowers, and glowing red and yellow fall leaves. Grows in full sun or part shade, as a large multi-trunk shrub or small tree. Tasty fruit for humans too! Little or no pruning needed.
Cornus sericea (Red Twig Dogwood)*	8-12 ft tall and wide	Nectar feeds adult butterflies, and foliage feeds butterfly larvae. Fruit feeds many birds. Good perching site.	Large cream-colored flowers bloom from spring to fall, followed by large white berries. Fountain-like form, red branches, fantastic fall leaf colors of gold, red, and orange. Erosion-controlling roots. Smaller cultivars available: C. 'Isanti', C. 'Kelseyii', and Cornus alba,
Vaccinium ovatum (Evergreen Huckleberry)	4 ft tall and wide in sun, 8 ft x 3 ft in shade	Fruit feeds many birds. Good year round shelter and nesting site for small birds.	Evergreen, can thrive in sun or shade, delicate leaves are red edged in fall and winter, deep red stem color, delicious fruit for humans too! Vase-like arching form, little or no pruning needed.

### Large Shrubs and Small Trees:

Name	Hgt x Width	Wildlife Value	Landscape Aesthetic, Practicality, and Care
Acer circinnatum (Vine maple)*	15-30ft tall and wide	Nectar feed bees and seeds eaten by grosbeaks, woodpeckers, nuthatches, and finches. Great perching and nesting site.	Graceful form and branch structure, much like Japanese Maple. Spring flowers, "bow tie" seed pods, new leaves, and branches are pinkish-red. Spectacular red and gold fall leaves. Sun or part-shade, moist to dry soils, erosion-controlling roots. Little or no pruning needed.
Myrica californica (Pacific Wax Myrtle)	15-20 ft tall and 8-10 ft wide	Fruit eaten by flickers, stellar's jay, chickadees, bushtit, waxwings, and other birds. Good year round shelter site and nesting site.	Evergreen, glossy leaves are fragrant when crushed. Good screening plant, fast growing, with flexible branches that move with the wind. Thrives in full sun to part-shade, moist to dry soil conditions. Little or no pruning needed, but can be thinned for a more tree-like form.
Pinus contorta var. contorta (Shore Pine)	20-30 ft tall and wide in urban areas, sometimes larger	Seeds and/or resident insects eaten by multiple birds. Foliage used by butterflies. Good summer and winter shelter for birds of all sizes.	Evergreen, with interesting, scaled-textured bark. Form and structure can be twisted and gnarled, giving a sense of age even when the tree is young. Once established, thrives in hot, dry conditions with no supplemental water. Little or no pruning needed.