

Landscaping with PNW Native Plants



Mason Conservation District

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Topics

1. What is “native?”
2. Why use native plants?
3. Design tips / landscaping strategies
4. Native plants
5. Resources



What's in a name?

“Native Plants”:

"Washington native plants are those species that occur or historically occurred within the state boundaries before European contact, based upon the best available scientific and historical documentation."

- Washington Native Plant Society

How native is native? . . . Native to . . . the West Coast? . . . to Washington State? Western Washington? Oakland Bay Watershed?

■ **Exotic Plants:**

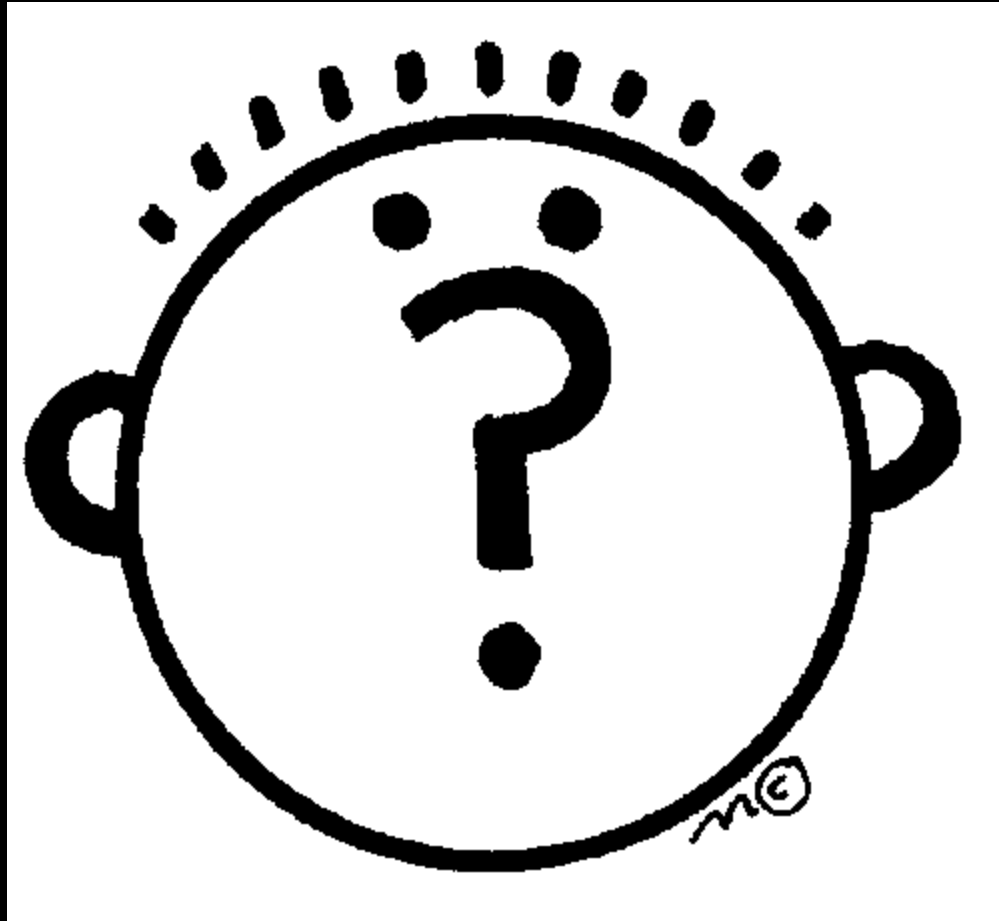
Plants that were introduced from another region or bred as cultivars from regionally local plants (plants found on the West coast, for example).

- **Named Cultivars** – can include natives propagated for specific desirable characteristics

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi 'Vancouver Jade'

- **Naturalized Plants:** Exotic plants that persist in their new location without cultivation. Some become “invasive.”
- **Invasive Plants:** Invasive species are plants, animals, or organisms that spread so quickly that they harm other wildlife or natural processes. - *Washington Invasive Species Council*

Why Landscape with Native Plants?



Practical Reasons ...

1. **Save time** (low maintenance once established)
2. **Save money** (few inputs, bareroot = inexpensive)
3. **Protect your property** (erosion, stormwater, weeds)
4. **Help the neighbors** (repeat above)
5. **Protect our local economy** (water quality, recreation)
6. **Conserve natural resources for your children . . .
and their children...** (ground and surface water
protection, forest products, hunting and shellfish . . .)

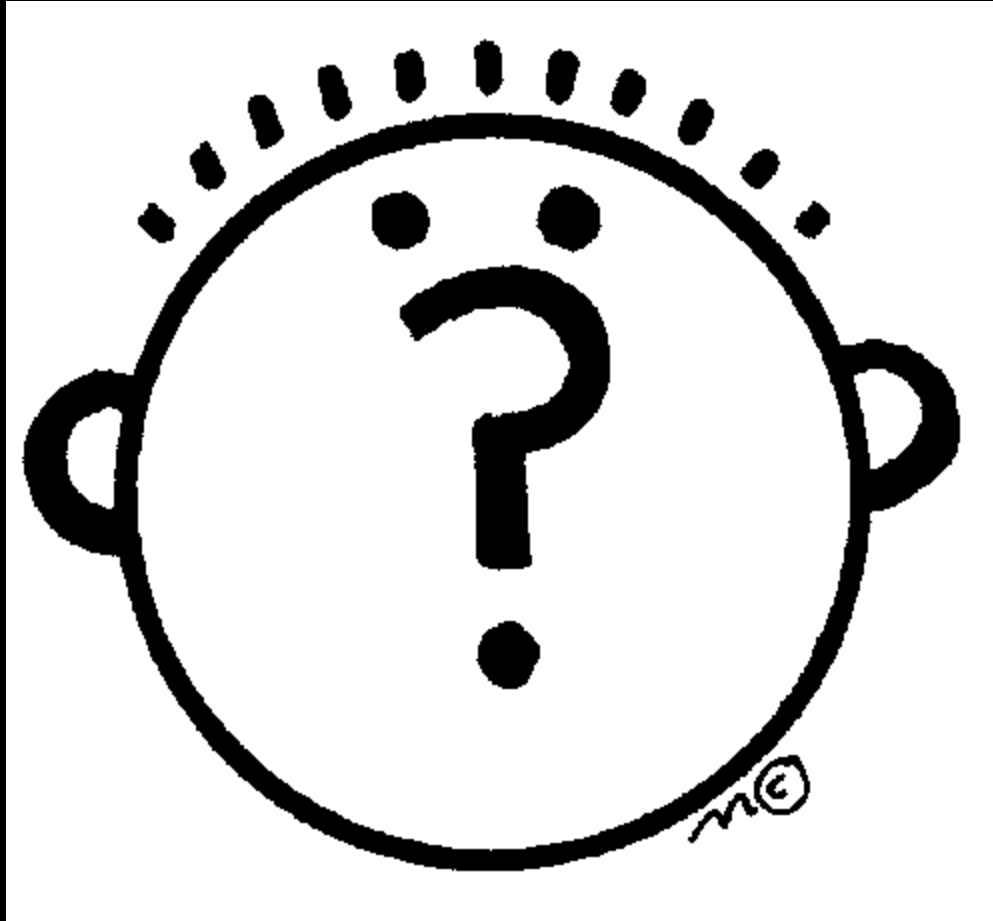


A Few More Reasons . . .

- **Cultivate a “Sense of Place”**
- **Opportunity to learn – and teach!**
- **Support our wildlife neighbors**



Where to Begin?



Design Tips / Inspiration



- **Goals**
- **Considerations**
- **Narrowing focus**
- **“Orderly” landscapes**
- **“Natural” landscapes**

1. Clear goals

Ecological restoration vs. landscape design

Restoration goals?

- increase diversity
- salmon habitat
- migratory birds
- improve flood control
- replace invasive species
- rare plants

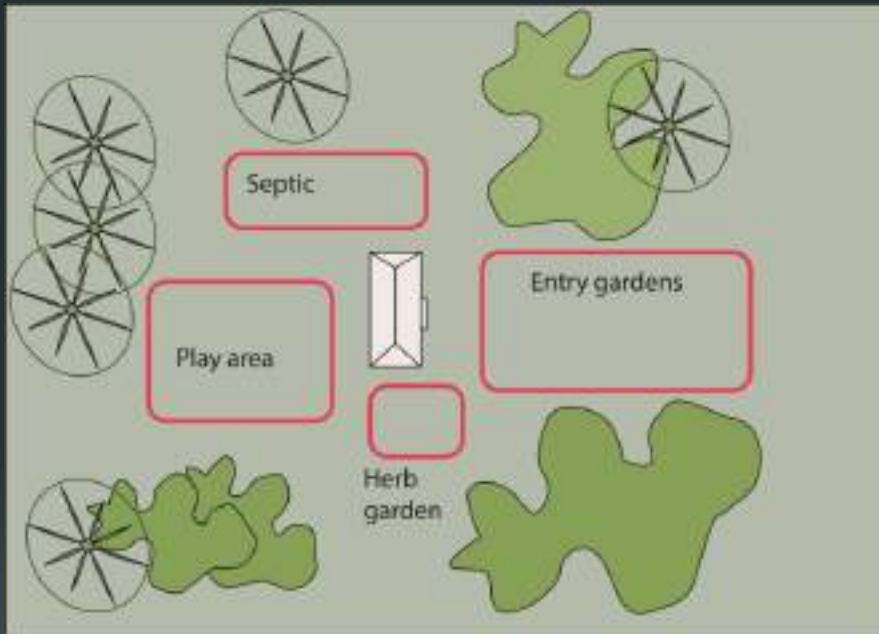
Landscaping* goals?

- Block or reveal views
- Display color combinations
- Define different areas
- Pure pleasure

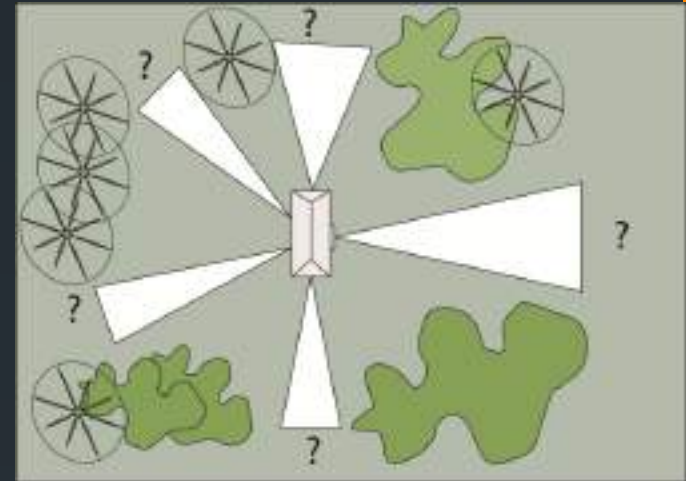
*** Will still have benefits for the environment!**

2. Considerations

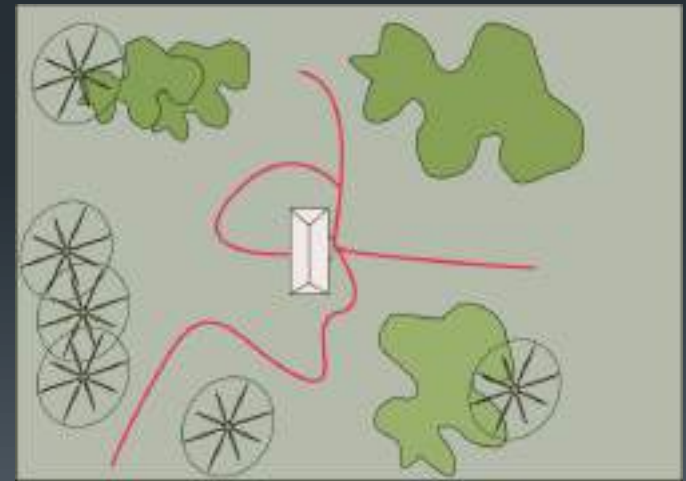
- site conditions
- different uses / movement
- views



**Define the spaces you will use
... and those you won't use.**



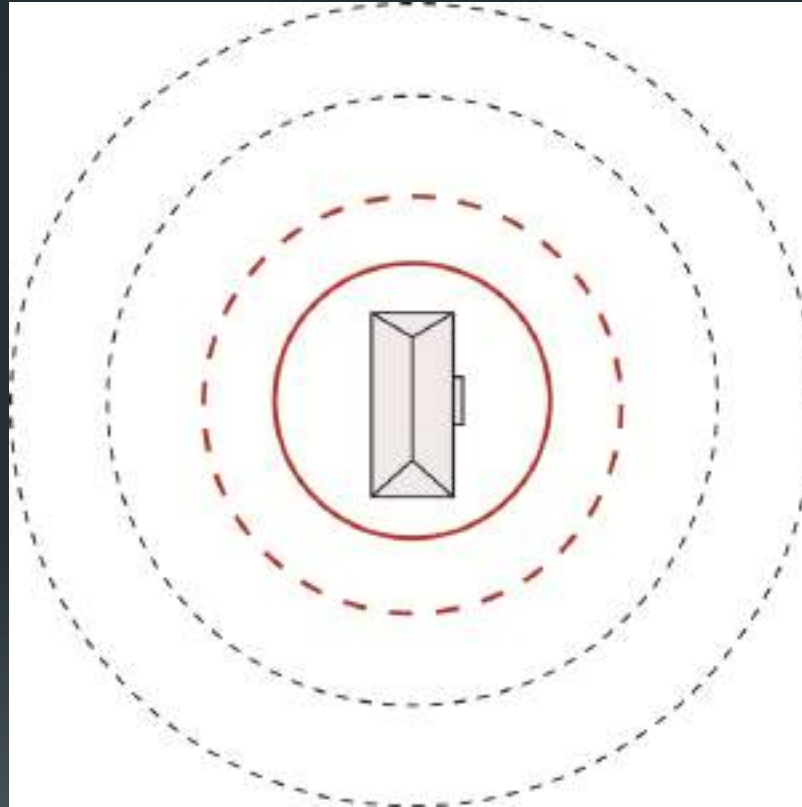
Views? Inside & Outside



**Circulation? Define paths
before you plant.**

3. Narrow your focus

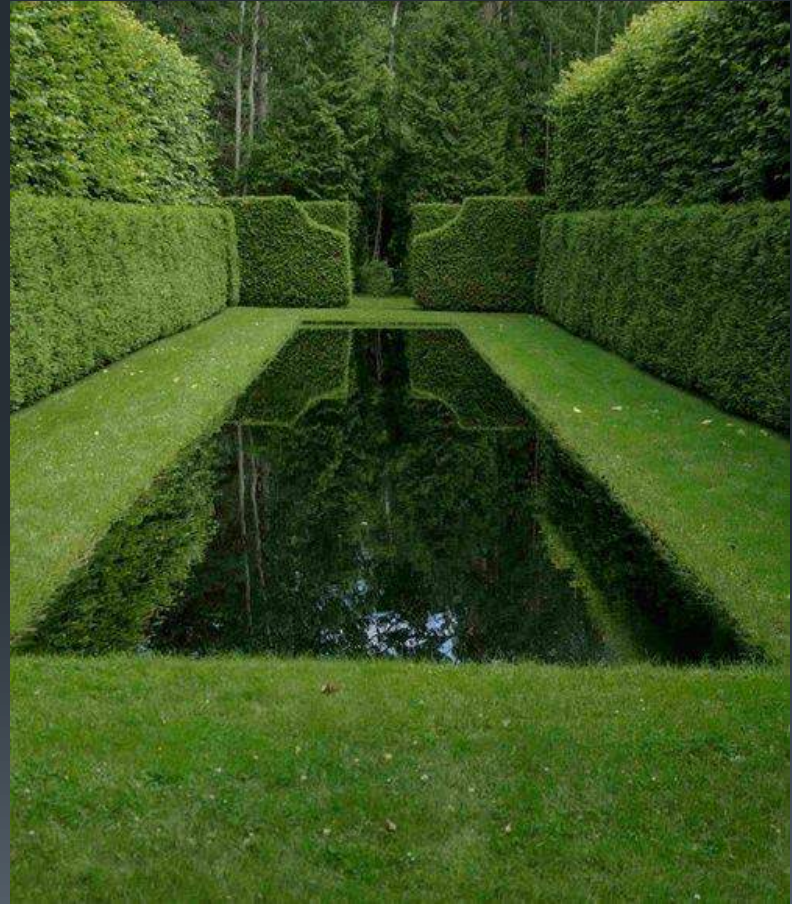
What can you realistically achieve now?



“Zones of focus”

4. Design Styles (*simplified*)

“Natural” or “Orderly” . . . Native plants work in both.



“Orderly” Landscapes

Neat

**Appear
“cared for”**

**A familiar
approach**



Challenges

- **Less habitat value (less diversity)**
- **Lots of maintenance keeps everything looking tidy.**

“orderly” characteristics

- **Simplicity**
- **Linear, geometric spaces**
- **Repetition of limited plant species**
- **Planting heights limited**



*Dan Kiley, “Miller House” (IN)
Modernist Landscape Architect*

“Natural” Landscapes



Piet Oudolf, Garden Designer

“Natural” Characteristics

- **Diversity (10 + species in a planting area)**
- **Curve lines and shapes, variety**
- **Multi-seasonal emphasis**
- **Use “drifts” (groups of the same species); repeat accent plants for color, shape**
- **Maintenance: replacement, clean up, mulching, tolerance for seed heads . . .**

“Natural” = habitat opportunity



To encourage birds/bugs/critters

- Plant in layers
- Use a diversity of species – especially native
- Emphasize fruits, nuts, flowers, 4 seasons
- Provide a source of water (with an escape route)
- Consider connections – many animals don't like to cross open spaces; others thrive along edges





Create “order” by repeating colors and/or plant species

Challenges:

- Too “messy” or disorderly?
- Visually stimulating - or overwhelming?
- Periodic investment in new plants
- Attracts bees/bugs/birds; pollen



Combine the “orderly” & “natural”



Roberto Burle Marx,
Brazilian Landscape Architect (1909-1994)

Combine Styles . . .

Clean edges

Open yet dense

Layered plantings

Mixed heights

**Repetition of
accent plants or
trees**



COLOR tips

- Use “drifts” with similar color range
- Add one contrasting color for contrast
- Provide areas for visual “rest” – just green.
- Repeat color blocks throughout the garden to unify





Seattle garden



**Bloedel Reserve,
Bainbridge Island**





- sculptural elements
- repetition

- linear use of trees
- diverse understory



- **Hardscape materials like concrete, metal, and wood contrast with diverse plantings. Simple, clean, elegant lines and visual interest.**



**Rain Garden in Olympia
– mixed natives and ornamentals (L. Andrews)**

Wildlife garden in King County:

wet area used as a seasonal water feature that . . . recharges groundwater, filters nutrients, provides precious amphibian habitat . .

.



PUD #3 / Johns Prairie: 90% native species & accents





Planting your native garden

- 1. Soils + Site Prep**
- 2. Types of native planting stock & when to plant**
- 3. Right Plant, Right Place: overview of native species**

Soils & Site Preparation

- Generally, you don't need to amend soils for native plants – they will adapt to the location.
- Add compost and mulch to the soil surface
(help retain soil moisture, discourage weeds, provide slow-release nutrients)
- Water for the first 2-3 summers



Types of native plant stock

Container Stock

- easy to transplant
- can leave in pot for a long period of time
- Available all year
- Ideal planting time: Fall

Expensive, Heavy to move



Bare Root Plants

- Inexpensive
- Easy to handle
- Light weight
- Only available ~ Feb.
- Need to plant quickly
- Store in cool, moist conditions (heel in)
- Roots must stay moist and tops dormant until planting in late fall or early spring



Planting Technique:

- Soak roots in water overnight
- Dig hole
- Mound soil in bottom
- Spread roots over mound, separating them
- Backfill with original soil

PLAN FOR MATURE PLANT SIZE

Choose and locate plants based on their eventual “mature size” – (unless you love pruning).

Look for examples in the landscape around you. Use your camera/cell phone to take pictures

Select plants with different mature heights to create more interest.





NATIVE PLANTS FOR MARINE SHORELINES

The list of Pacific Northwest native plants below includes species that provide food and shelter to local wildlife, that are tolerant of salt spray, and that help stabilize slopes. Please remember that this is a general reference list; not all of these species will thrive on every site because local shoreline conditions vary. If you purchase plants, order them using their botanical name (*italicized, in parentheses*) because common names vary. Happy planting! For guidance specific to your property, contact a natural resource specialist at Mason Conservation District (360) 427-9435.

- ◆ Salt spray tolerant
- Soil stabilization
- 💧 Prefer moist soils

SMALL TREES / LARGE SHRUBS

- Beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*) ◆○
- Douglas Maple (*Acer glabrum*) ◆○
- Indian Plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)
- Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) ◆
- Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) ◆○
- Pacific Crabapple (*Malus fusca*) ◆
- Red Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) ◆
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) ◆
- Vine Maple (*Acer circinatum*)
- Wax Myrtle (*Myrica californica*) ◆○
- Sweet gale (*Myrica gale*) ◆○
- Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*) ◆○

LARGE TREES

- Big-leaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) ◆○💧
- Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) ◆○
- Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*) ○
- Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*) ◆○
- Hooker's Willow (*Salix hookeriana*) ◆○💧
- Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) ◆○
*beautiful but difficult to establish
- Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*) ◆
- Scouler's Willow (*Salix scouleriana*) ◆○💧
- Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta* v. *contorta*) ◆○
- Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) ◆○
- Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) *shade 💧
- Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) *shade ◆○💧
- Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*) ◆○



More recommendations on the reverse side!

Right Plant, Right Place

Favorite Pacific Northwest Natives for Landscaping



Acer circinatum (Vine Maple)

Deciduous tree / shrub

Slow growing to 25 ft

Part Shade, moist to dry







*** Great for pots**

Fall color

Specimen plant

Wildlife – bugs + birds



Myrica californica (Pacific Wax Myrtle)

Evergreen, Large shrub

Fast growing to ~ 15 ft

Sun, well drained soils

* Great for hedges, privacy







Blechnum spicant (Deer Fern)

1 – 3 ft tall

Common under-story plant in moist conifer forests.

* Great for texture, shade, low growing groundcover, drifts





Polystichum munitum (Western Sword Fern)

To 4 ft tall

Common under-story plant in
moist conifer forests.

* Great for texture, shade to
part-sun, mid-sized shrub,
drifts





Gaultheria shallon

Salal

To 4 ft tall

Common under-story plant
in moist conifer forests.

Shade / Part-shade

Moist to dry

* Great for low hedges, fruit,
shade, mid-sized shrub,
drifts







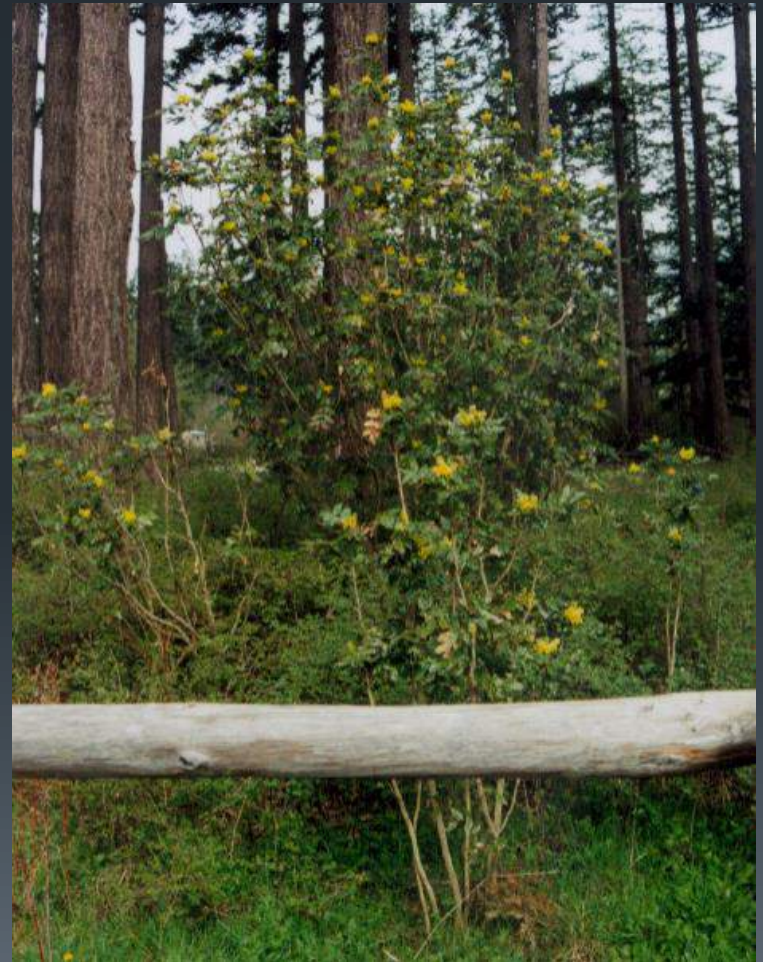
Berberis sp. (Oregon Grape)

Tall (3-6'): Dry, sun, slopes, shorelines

Low (1-3') : shade, understory, moist-dry

Slow growing, tough, spreads

- Beautiful flowers, fruit, leaves
- Not fun to walk through – sharp leaves



Berberis aquifolium (Tall Oregon Grape)



Berberis nervosa (Low Oregon Grape)



Vaccinium ovatum (Evergreen huckleberry)



To 4 ft tall

Common under-story plant

Shade / Part-shade

Moist to dry

* Great for low hedges, fruit, shade,
mid-sized shrub, evergreen foliage



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnikinnick)



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnikinnick)



To ½ ft tall

Groundcover for sun, dry soils

Slow to establish



Fragaria chiloensis (Coastal Strawberry)



Holodiscus discolor (Oceanspray)

Deciduous Shrub- Up to 15 ft.
Salt spray tolerant

Blooms: April – August
Flowers: Creamy white,
sometimes blushing salmon/pink





Moisture req.: dry - moist
Exposure req.: sun – shade

Rosa sp.

Rosa Gymnocarpa (Baldhip Rose)



Up to 5 ft

Leaves: 1- cm long 5-9 toothed leaflets

Flowers: pale pink; 1-2 cm across

Fruits: Purplish red; 1-2 cm

Rosa nutkana (Nootka Rose)



Up to 10 ft.

Leaves: 1-7 cm long 5-7 leaflets

Flowers: Pink; 4-8 cm across

Fruit: Orange to scarlet; 6-10mm

Rubus spectabilis (Salmonberry)

3-10 ft tall

Moist places



Philadelphus lewisii (Mock Orange)

To 10 ft tall

Dry, full sun, tough





Ribes sanguineum (Red flowering currant)



Ribes sanguineum (Red flowering currant)



Garrya elliptica (Silk Tassle)



Physocarpus capitatus (Pacific Ninebark)





Cornus sericea (Red-osier dogwood)





Amelanchier alnifolia
(Western Serviceberry / Saskatoon Berry)





Oemeleria cerasiformis (Osoberry)



Pacific Rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)



Rubus parviflorus (Thimbleberry)



Rubus parviflorus (Thimbleberry)



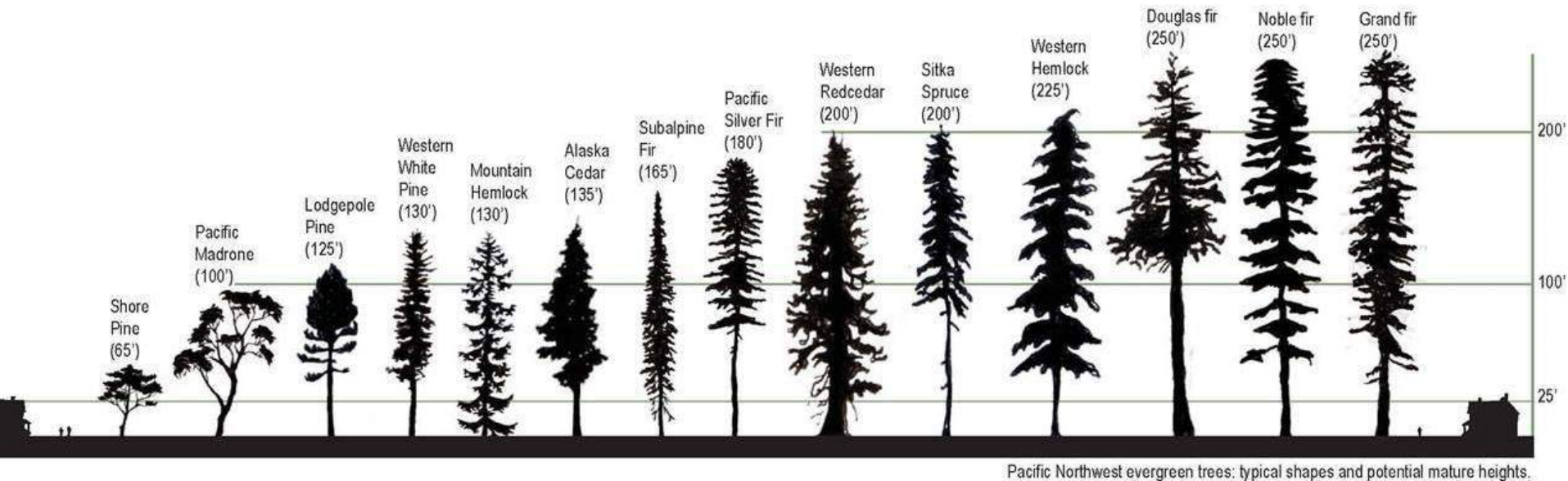
Deschampsia cespitosa (Tufted hairgrass)



Symphoricarpos albus (Snowberry)



Treasure your trees!



- Choose the right tree for your site and your goals.
- Hire a professional arborist to prune for views rather than removing the tree.

2. Trees are worth their weight in gold:

Only remove trees when truly necessary. Trees help control stormwater, mitigate erosion, protect water quality, aid aquifer recharge, provide habitat . . .



Acer macrophyllum (Big Leaf maple)



Quercus garryana (Garry Oak)



Arbutus menziesii (Pacific madrone)





To 100 ft tall

Dry, sun, slopes and shorelines

Extremely difficult to establish; hates disturbance

Prone to several diseases

*** Beautiful bark, flowers, fruit, open growth habit for shoreline stabilization and views**



Douglas fir



Western red cedar



Grand fir



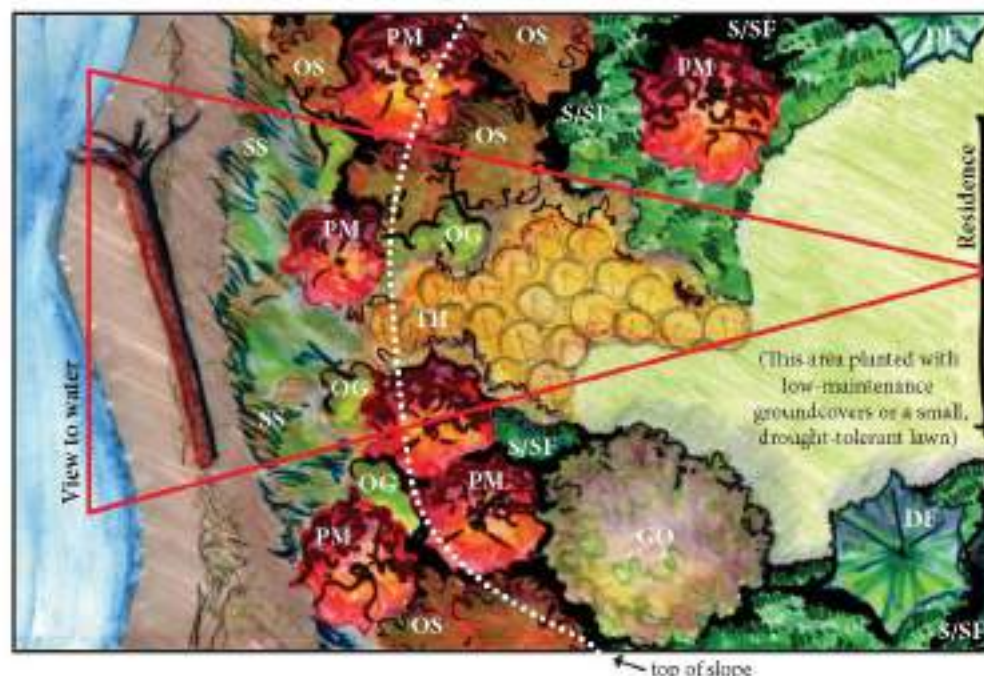
**SAMPLE PLANTING PLAN: LAKE SHORELINE***Focus on Pacific Northwest Native Plants***SYMBOL** *Water's Edge (saturated soils)***Slough Sedge** (*Carex obnupta*)*SSmall-fruited Bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*)Hardstem Bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*)Sawbeak Sedge (*Carex stipitata*)Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)Common Rush (*Juncus effusus*)Slender Rush (*Juncus tenuis*)Tapered Rush (*Juncus acuminatus*)**SYMBOL** *Lower Bank (moist soils)***Oregon Ash** (*Fraxinus latifolia*)...Black Cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*
sp. *trichocarpa*)...Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)*S**Pacific Crabapple** (*Malus fusca*)**Red Elderberry** (*Sambucus racemosa*)*S...Pacific Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)...Black Hawthorne (*Crataegus douglasii*)**Red-osier Dogwood** (*Cornus sericea*)*S...High Bush Cranberry (*Viburnum edule*)...Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)...Daggerleaf Bush (*Juncus acutifolius*)**Hookers Willow** (*Salix hookeriana*)...Pacific Willow (*Salix lasioandra*)...Sitka Willow (*Salix sitchensis*)**SYMBOL** *Upper Bank (moist/dry soils)***Western Hemlock** (*Tsuga heterophylla*)*S...Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)*S...Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta* v. *contorta*)**Big Leaf Maple** (*Acer macrophyllum*)*S...Vine Maple (*Acer circinnatum*)*S...Western Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*)*S...Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)**Salal** (*Gaultheria shallon*)*S...Sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*)*S...Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)*S**Swamp Rose** (*Rosa pisocarpa*)...Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*)...Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)**Deer Fern** (*Blechnum spicant*)*S...False Solomon's Seal (*Smilacina racemosa*)*S

*S = tolerate part to deep shade ... Alternative plant choices are listed in gray



SAMPLE PLANTING PLAN: MARINE SHORELINE

Focus on Pacific Northwest Native Plants



SYMBOL TREE / LARGE SHRUBS

(* ... Alternative plant choices are listed in gray)



Pacific Madrone
(*Arbutus menziesii*)



Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
— Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)
— Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta* v. *amborta*)



Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*)
— Pacific Crabapple (*Malus fusca*)
— Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)



View to water

View created by carefully pruning trees and selecting low-growing shrubs. (Avoid completely removing plants - this usually causes erosion problems)

SYMBOL SHRUB | GROUND COVER



Ocean Spray (*Holodiscus discolor*)
— Wax Myrtle (*Myrica californica*)
— Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)



Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
— Sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*)
— Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos alba*)



Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia/Berberis aquifolium*)
— Nootka Rose (*Rosa nutkana*)
— Hookers Willow (*Salix hookeriana*)



Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)
— Coastal Lupine (*Lupinus littoralis*)
— Coastal Strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)



Seashore saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*)
— Silverweed (*Plantilla pacifica*)
— Henderson's Checker-mallow (*Sidalcea hendersonii*)

It's okay to mix it up!

Ornamentals and natives both have benefits – don't hesitate to use both in your landscape. Let gardening be a joy.



100% native



Mix of native and ornamental

Happy Gardening



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Mason Conservation District