

Landscaping with Native Plants



Mason Conservation District

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Landscaping with Native Plants

1. What is “native”
2. Why use native plants?
3. Problem plants
4. Design Tips
5. Favorite plants
6. Planting Tips
7. 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*

Problem Plants in the Pacific NW



Invasive: Himalayan Blackberry

Rubus discolor or *R. procerus*, *R. armeniacus*

❖ native to western Europe



Invasive: English Ivy

Hedera helix

❖ native to most of Europe
and southwest Asia

Problem Plants



Invasive: Scotch Broom

Cytisus scoparius

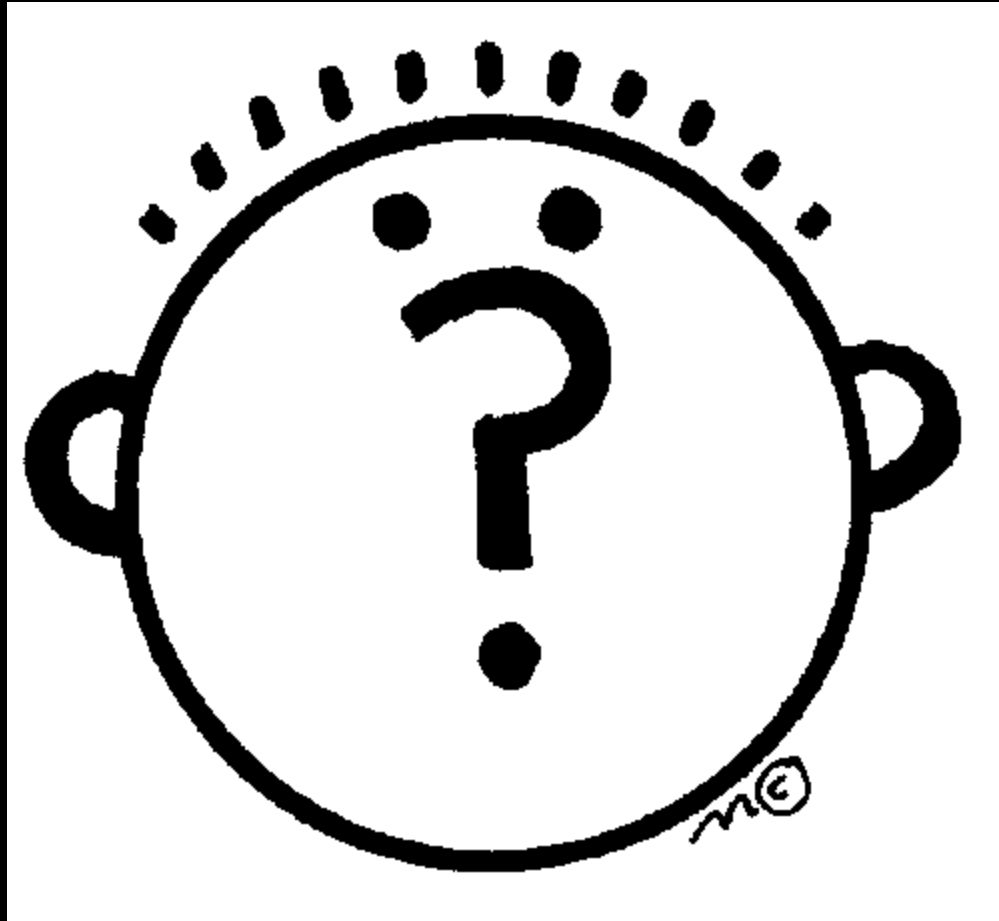
- ❖ **Native to western and central Europe**

Naturalized: Compact Oregon Grape – a cultivar

Mahonia aquifolium 'Compacta'

- ❖ **Interbreeding w/ local populations may alter local gene pool**

Why Landscape with Native Plants?



Practical Reasons ...

1. **Save time** (generally low maintenance)
2. **Save money** (few inputs, bareroot = inexpensive)
3. **Protect your property** (erosion, stormwater, invasives)
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 . . .

1. **Develop a “Sense of Place”**
2. **Opportunity to learn**
3. **Support your wildlife community**



How to Landscape with Native Plants?



A few starting thoughts . . .

1. **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.



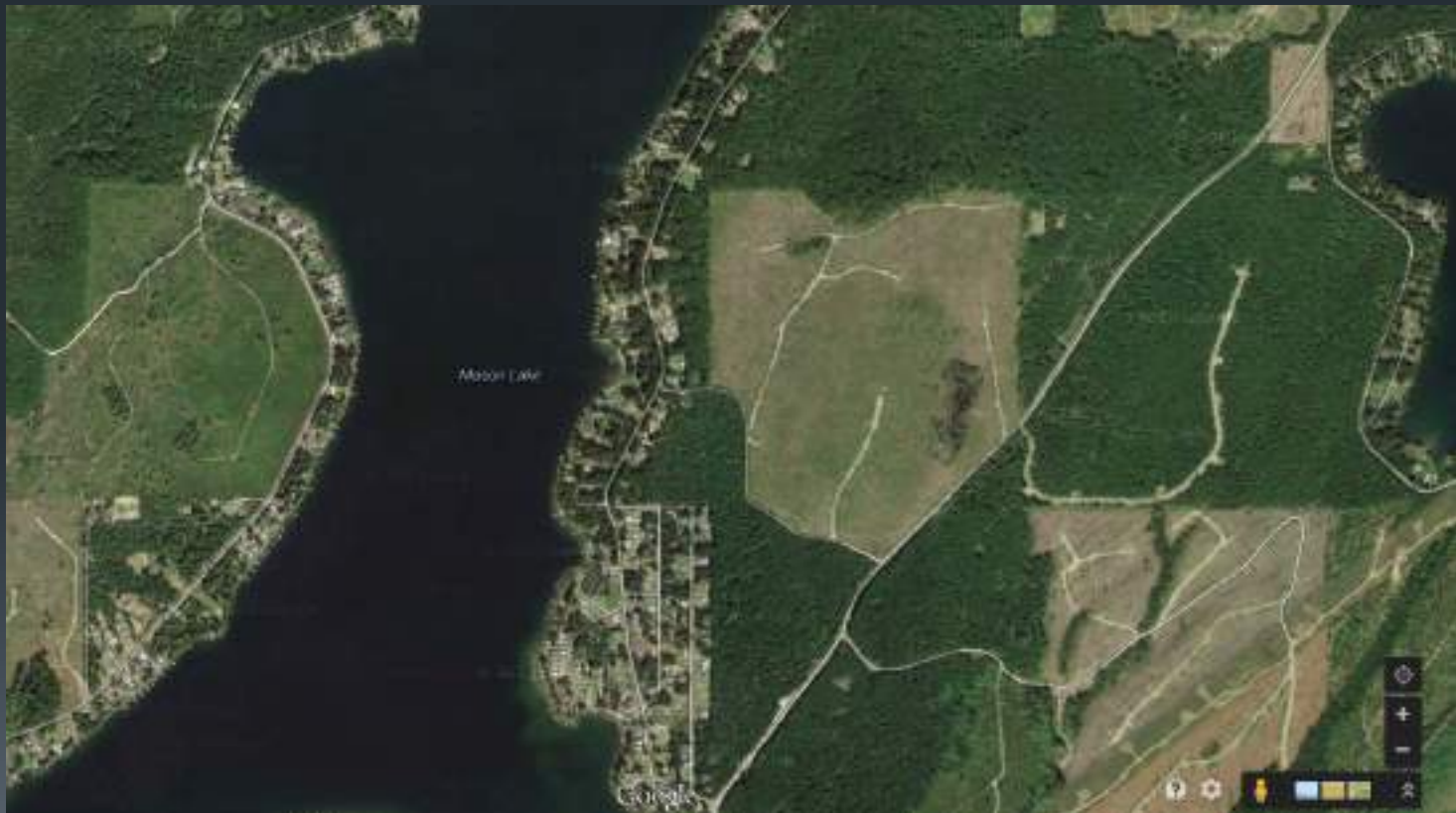
100% native



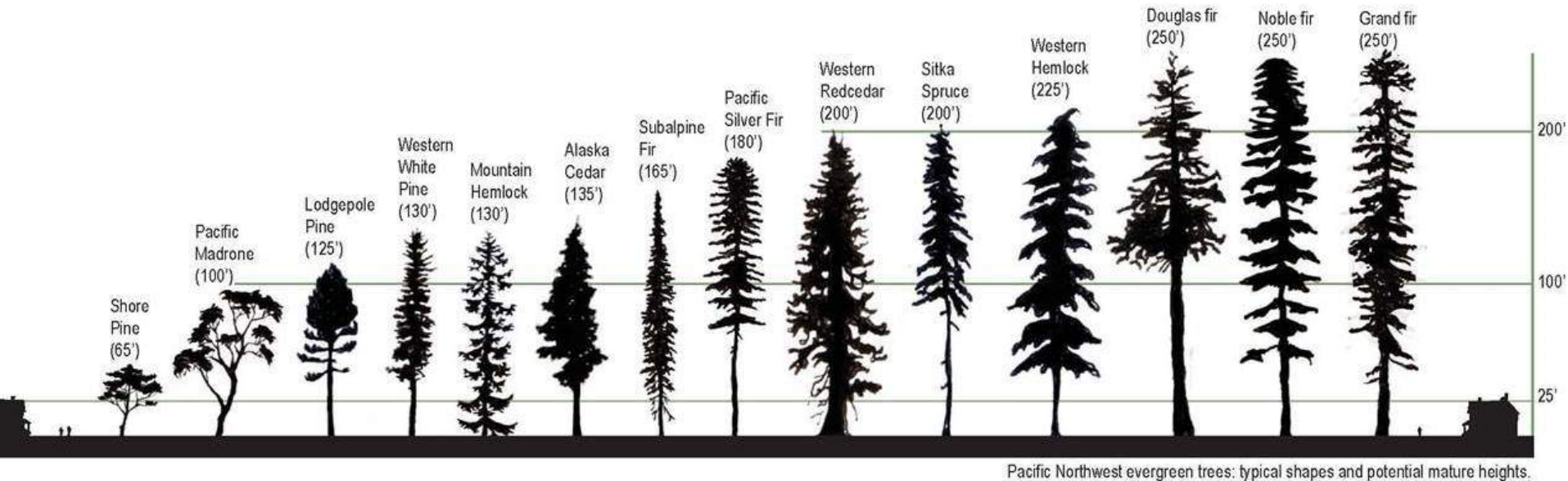
Mix of native and ornamental

2. Trees are worth their weight in gold:

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



Protect 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.

3. Seasonal wet areas are very important.

They help to recharge groundwater and filter out pollution. Don't drain these areas! Instead, integrate them into your garden design.



Quick Design Tips



1. Defining Goals
2. Considerations
3. Narrowing focus

4. “Orderly” landscapes
5. “Natural” landscapes

1. Clarify Goals

Ecological restoration vs. landscape design

Restoration goals might include:

- Improve salmon habitat
- Encourage nesting sites for migratory birds
- Increase diversity of stream aquatic insects
- Expand water storage to improve flood control
- Prevent spread of non-native species
- Increase rare plant populations

Landscaping* goals might include:

- Hide undesirable views
- Reduce road noise
- Provide bright fall foliage
- Create shade to reduce cooling costs
- Display pleasing color combinations
- Delineate paths and sitting areas

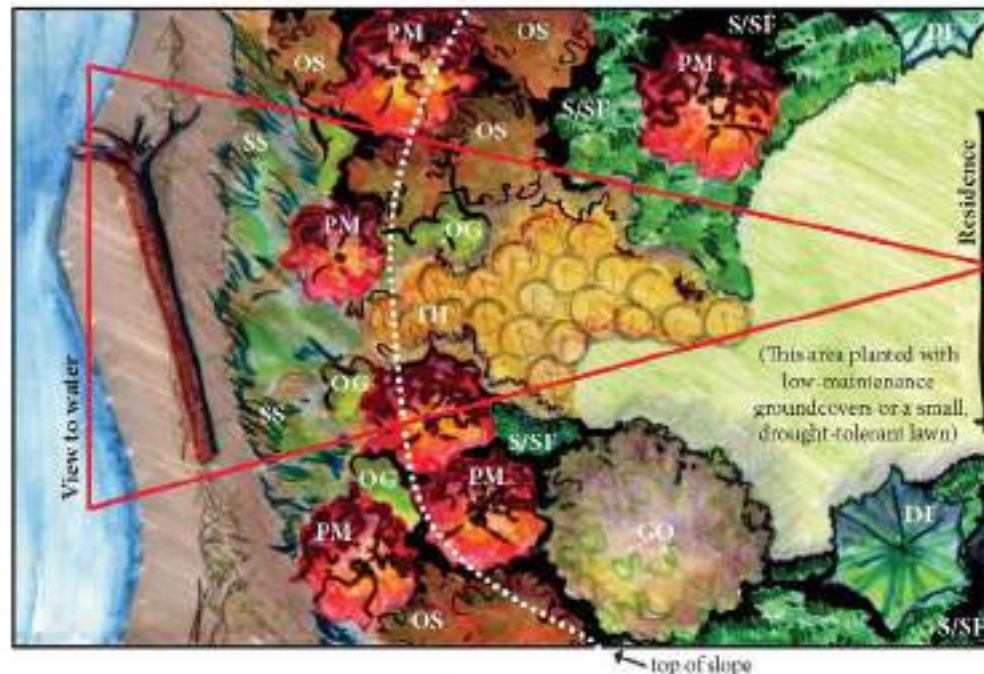
*** Will still have serious benefits to the environment!**

**SAMPLE PLANTING PLAN: LAKE SHORELINE***Focus on Pacific Northwest Native Plants***SYMBOL** *Waters Edge (saturated soils)***Slough Sedge** (*Carex obnupta*)*SSmall-fruited Bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*)Hardstem Bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*)Sawbeak Sedge (*Carex stipata*)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 ensifolius*)**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 cornum*)*S...Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)**Salal** (*Gaultheria shallon*)*S...Sword fern (*Polystichum munzianum*)*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 grey)



Pacific Madrone
(*Arbutus menziesii*)



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



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*)



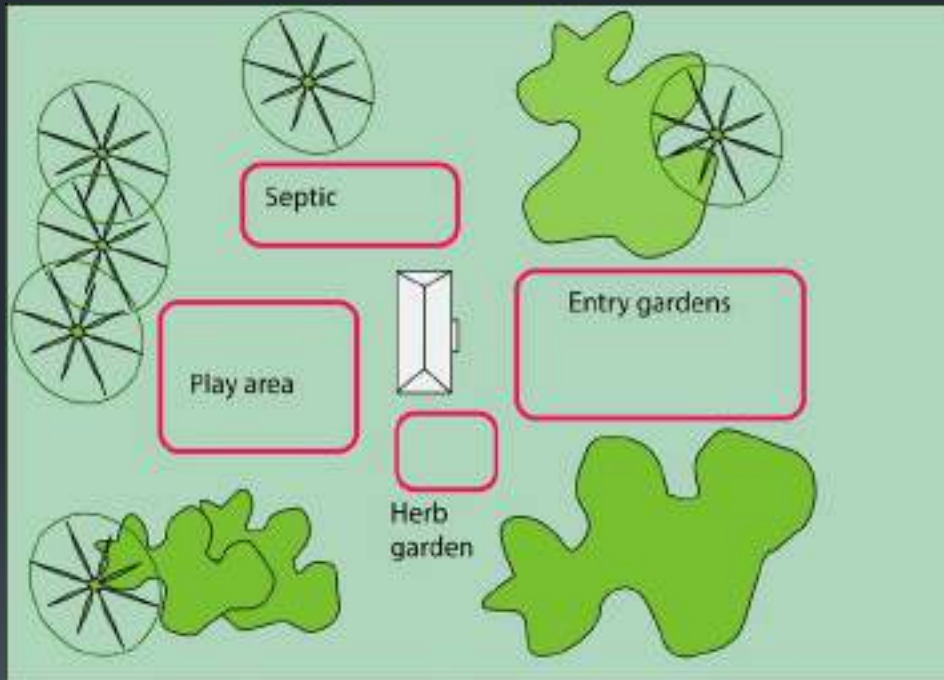
Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)
.. Coastal Lupine (*Lupinus maritimus*)
.. Coastal Strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)



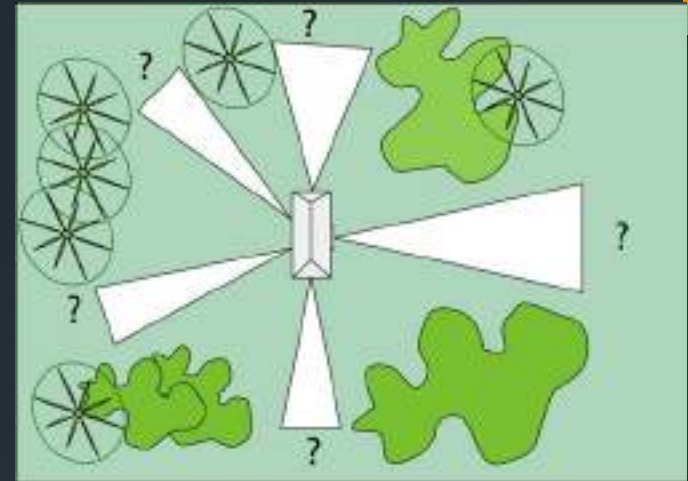
Seashore saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*)
.. Silverweed (*Potentilla pacifica*)
.. Henderson's Checker-mallow (*Sidalcea hendersonii*)

2. Basic design considerations

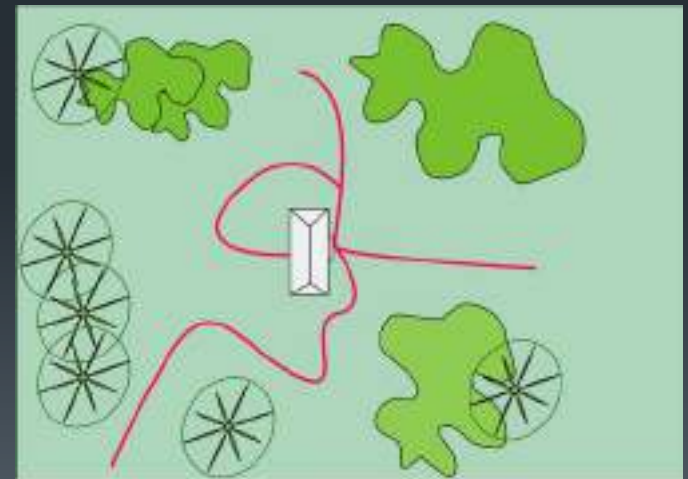
Consider site conditions,
spatial use, views,
circulation, maintenance



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



Views? Inside & Outside



Circulation? Define paths
before you plant.

CONSIDER MATURE PLANT SIZE

Choose and locate plants based on their eventual “mature size” – not by how they look at the nursery, and not based on the plan to “prune” them (unless you love topiary).

Look for examples in the landscape around you – this will allow you to walk up to the plant and see what the experience is like. Take your camera/cell phone and take pictures

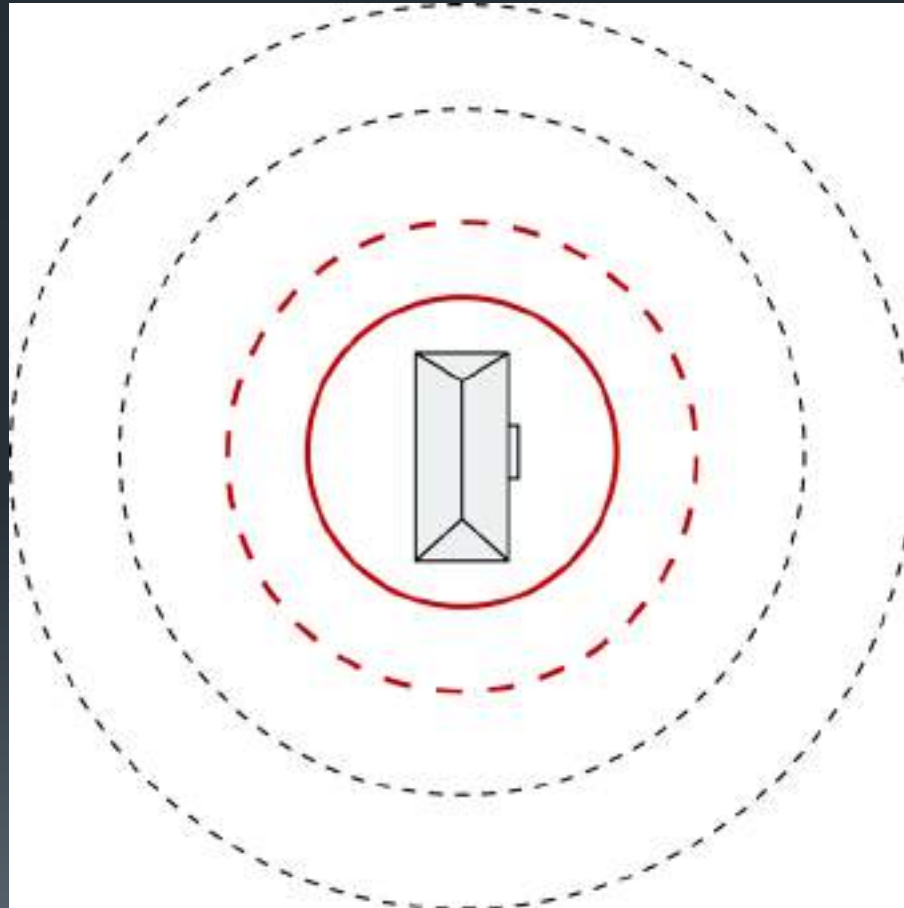
Select plants with different mature heights to create more interest.



3. Narrow your focus

What can you realistically achieve now?

“Zones of focus”



4. Design Styles (simplified)

“Natural” or “Orderly” . . . You can use native plants in both styles.



“Orderly” Landscapes

Neat

Uncluttered

**Appear
“cared for”**

**Most
common**

Challenges

- **Less habitat value (less diversity)**
- **Needs regular maintenance to keep everything looking tidy and clean.**



Typical “orderly” characteristics

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



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



Seattle garden

“Natural” Landscapes



Piet Oudolf, Garden Designer

“Natural” Landscape Characteristics

- **Diversity is fundamental (10-15 species, minimum)**
- **Organic shapes, curves, variety of sizes**
- **Choose plants emphasizing 4 seasons**
- **Repeat species in “drifts” (groups of the same species); repeat accent plants for color, shape**
- **Great habitat value: pollinators, birds**
- **Maintenance: replacement of perennials, clean up, mulching . . .**


“Natural” Landscapes



Natural Landscapes: wildlife

- Plant in layers of different heights
- Use a diversity of species
- 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” through
repetition of color / species**

Challenges to “natural” look:

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



Mixing Styles



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

Color

- Use “drifts” (bunches of the same plant) with similar colors
- Add one contrasting color
- Provide areas for visual “rest” – just green – to allow eyes to rest and to provide variation.
- Repeat color blocks throughout the garden to unify the design



Combine Styles . . .

Clean edges

Open and dense

Layered planting

**Species of
different heights**

**Repetition of
accent plants or
trees**





**Bloedel Reserve,
Bainbridge Island**





Sculptural elements, Repetition, Linear tree plantings, diverse understory



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

Leavenworth, WA: Strictly WA native landscape





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

Wildlife garden in King County, including “snag” and native species



**Wildlife garden in King County:
seasonal wet area becomes a water feature. . .**



PUD #3 - 90% native species with ornamental accents



WA Park Arboretum (UW Botanic Garden):



**Mixed native/non-native
landscape**



**Retaining wall and native planting
above . . .**

UW campus, new dorms- native planting in landscape (GGN)







Implementing your Design



- 1. Soils + Site Prep**
- 2. Picking your planting stock**
- 3. Right Plant, Right Place:
Site Conditions + Exposure**

Planting & Soils

- 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 around plants to help retain soil moisture and discourage weeds, provide slow-release nutrients
- Water plants through the first two summers (minimum)



Forms of Native Plants Available

Container Stock

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

Expensive, Heavy to move



Bare Root Plants

- Inexpensive
- Easy to handle
- Light weight
- Only available in winter
- Must be planted quickly
- Must be stored in cool, moist conditions
- 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

Right Plant, Right Place



TAM
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 Mason Conservation District Native Plant Series

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 parenthesis) because common names vary. Happy planting! For guidance specific to your property, contact a natural resource specialist at Mason Conservation District (360) 427-0436.

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

SMALL TREES / LARGE SHRUBS

- Beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*) ◆○
- Douglas Maple (*Acer glabrum*) ◆○
- Indian Plum (*Oenothera cerasiformis*)
- Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) ◆
- Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) ◆○
- Pacific Crabapple (*Malus fusca*) ◆
- Red Elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) ◆
- Servicberry (*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*) ◆○
- ¹useful but difficult to establish
- Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*) ◆
- Scooter's Willow (*Salix scouleriana*) ◆○💧
- Shore Pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *contorta*) ◆○
- Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) ◆○
- Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) ¹shade 💧
- Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*) ¹shade ◆○💧
- Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*) ◆○



More recommendations on the reverse side!

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



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, groups or drifts





Polystichum munitum (Western Sword Fern)

To 4 ft tall

Common under-story plant in
moist conifer forests.

* Great for texture, shade,
midsized shrub, groups or
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, midsized shrub,
groups or drifts







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**



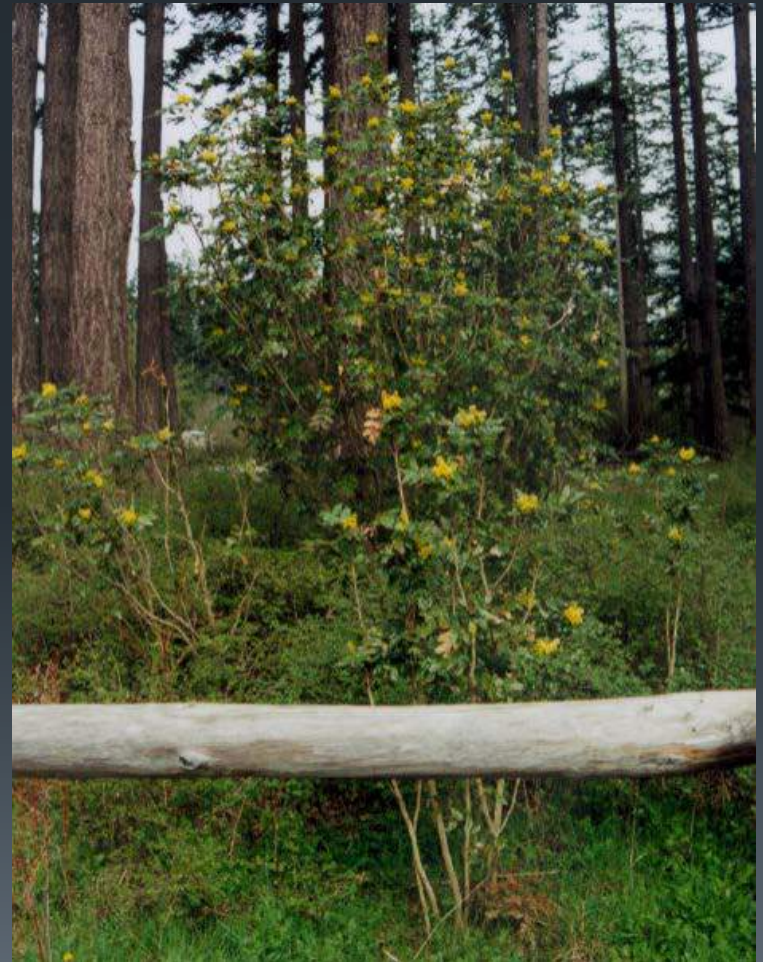
Berberis sp. (Oregon Grape)

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,
midsized shrub, evergreen foliage



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnikinnick)



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (Kinnikinnick)



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, rugged





Ribes sanguineum (Red flowering currant)



Ribes sanguineum (Red flowering currant)



Quercus garryana (Garry Oak)



Garrya elliptica (Silk Tassel)



Deschampsia cespitosa (Tufted hairgrass)



Physocarpus capitatus (Pacific Ninebark)





Cornus sericea (Red-osier dogwood)



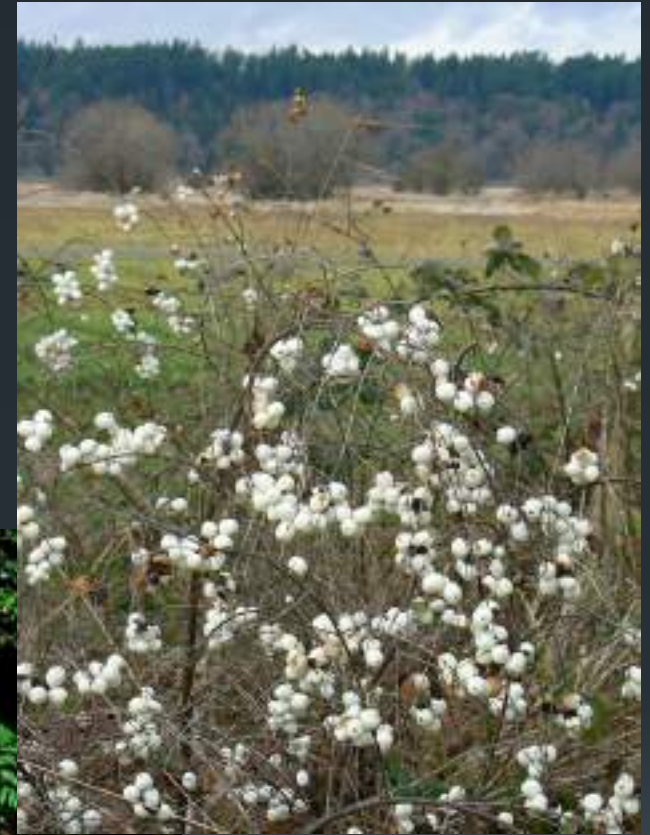


Amelanchier alnifolia (Western Serviceberry / Saskatoon Berry)





Symphoricarpos albus (Snowberry)



Oemeleria cerasiformis (Osoberry)



Pacific Rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)



Rubus parviflorus (Thimbleberry)



Rubus parviflorus (Thimbleberry)



Acer macrophyllum (Big Leaf maple)



Douglas fir



Western red cedar



Grand fir



Thank You!



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