

Gardening with Pacific Northwest Natives

The Pacific Northwest is blessed with an incredible array of native plants which are great ornamentals for the garden. Because these plants have evolved in our wet-winter, dry summer climate, they are able to thrive in gardens that may be challenging for introduced or exotic species. It is still important to know the right environment for each native plant you plan to use in your garden; each native species has its preferred environmental niche. If you have soil that is very sandy and lean, choose drought tolerant species that prefer well drained soils and can tolerate drought. If your soil is heavy and tends to stay wet well into summer, choose plants that tolerate wet soil.

We've put together a list of Pacific Northwest Natives with some very general information about what type of soils and sun exposures they prefer.



Plant	Light Exposure	Soil Type Preferred	Size at 10-15 Years	Comments
<i>Trees</i>				
<i>Acer circinatum</i> - Vine Maple	Sun to shade	Rich, well drained	15'-20'	Drops leaves early if too dry
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i> - Pacific Madrone	Sun to partial shade	Lean, Well drained	20'-30'	Difficult to establish
<i>Betula papyrifera</i> - Paper Birch	Sun	Average to Wet	30'	Fairly tolerant of wet soil
<i>Chamaecyparis nootkatensis</i> - Alaskan Cedar	Sun-partial shade	Average to moist	15'	Narrow form
<i>Cornus nuttallii</i> - Pacific Dogwood	Partial shade	Moist, well drained	20'-30'	Subject to canker
<i>Corylus cornuta</i> - Beaked Hazel	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	10'	Small edible nuts
<i>Picea sitchensis</i> - Sitka Spruce	Sun	Average to Wet	12'-15'	Fairly tolerant of wet soil
<i>Pinus contorta contorta</i> - Shore Pine	Sun	Average to Wet	10'-12'	Tolerates both drought and wet soil
<i>Prunus emarginata</i> - Bitter Cherry	Sun to partial shade	Average to Wet	10'-12'	Good wildlife tree as birds like the fruit

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<i>Quercus garryana</i> - Oregon White Oak	Sun	Lean, Well drained	15'-20'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> - Douglas Fir	Sun	Rich, well drained	12'-15'	Needs deep soil to tolerate wind
<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i> - Cascara	Partial to full shade	Dry to wet	10'	Fairly tolerant of wet soil
<i>Taxus brevifolia</i> - Pacific Yew	Partial to full shade	Rich, well drained	8'-10'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Thuja plicata</i> -Western Red Cedar	Sun to partial shade	Average	12'-15'	Excellent hedging tree
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i> - Western Hemlock	Sun to shade	Rich, well drained	10'-15'	Grows large
<i>Tsuga mertensiana</i> - Mountain Hemlock	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	6'-8'	Best conifer for small yards
Shrubs				
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i> -Serviceberry	Sun to partial shade	Average to wet	10'-12'	Good wildlife tree as birds like the fruit
<i>Arctostaphylos columbiana</i> - Hairy Manzanita	Sun to partial shade	Lean, well drained	4'-8'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> - Kinnikinnik	Sun to partial shade	Lean, well drained	6"-12" high, 3'-4' wide	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Cornus stolonifera</i> - Redtwig Dogwood	Sun to partial shade	Average to wet	6'-8'	Very tolerant of wet soil
<i>Garrya elliptica</i> -Silktassel	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	6'-8'	Drought tolerant
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i> - Salal	Sun to shade	Average to wet	3' high, Spreads	Prefers moist
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i> - Ocean Spray	Sun	Lean, well drained	8'-10'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Kalmia microphylla</i> - Mountain Laurel	Sun to partial shade	Average to wet	4'-6'	Fairly tolerant of wet soil, not drought tolerant

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<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> - Tall Oregon Grape	Sun to shade	Dry to wet	6'-8'	Tolerates many soil types
<i>Mahonia nervosa</i> - Low Oregon Grape	Partial shade to shade	Rich, well drained	2'-3' high, Spreads	Prefers rich soil
<i>Myrica californica</i> -Pacific Wax Myrtle	Sun to partial shade	Lean, well drained	10'-15'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Myrica gale</i> -Sweet Gale	Sun to partial shade	Average to wet	5'-6'	Very tolerant of wet soil
<i>Pachistima myrsinites</i> - Oregon Box	Sun to shade	Lean, well drained	2'-3'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i> - Mock Orange	Sun to partial shade	Lean, well drained	6'-8'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i> - Western NineBark	Sun to partial shade	Average to wet	8'-12'	Very tolerant of wet soil
<i>Rhododendron macrophyllum</i> - Pacific Rhododendron	Partial shade to shade	Lean, well drained	5'-6'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i> - Red Flowering Currant	Sun to partial shade	Lean, well drained	6'-8'	Drought tolerant when established. Good wildlife shrub, flowers for hummingbirds, and berries for songbirds.
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i> - Evergreen Huckleberry	Sun to shade	Rich, well drained	6'-8'	Sweet, edible berries late summer
<i>Vaccinium parviflorum</i> - Red Huckleberry	Partial shade to shade	Rich, well drained	6'-8'	Needs organic rich soil to thrive

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Native Perennials				
<i>Adiantum pedatum</i> - Maidenhair Fern	Partial shade to shade	Average to wet	2'	Needs moist summer soil
<i>Blechnum spicant</i> - Deer Fern	Partial shade to shade	Rich, well drained	2'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Polystichum minutum</i> - Sword Fern	Sun to shade	Dry to wet	2'-3'	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i> - Western Columbine	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	1'-2'	Loved by hummingbirds
<i>Asarum canadensis</i> - Wild Ginger	Partial shade to shade	Rich, well drained	6" high, spreads	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Camas leitchlini</i> - Great Camas	Sun to partial shade	Spring wet, summer dry	2'	Summer dormant
<i>Camas quamash</i> - Lesser Camas	Sun to partial shade	Spring wet, summer dry	1'	Summer dormant
<i>Cornus canadensis</i> - Bunchberry	Partial shade	Rich soil, some moisture	6" high, spreads	Some drought tolerance
<i>Dryas octapetala</i> - Mountain Avens	Sun	Lean, well drained	6" high, Spreads	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Erythronium oregonum</i> - Fawn Lily	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	6"-8"	Summer dormant
<i>Fritillaria lanceolata</i> - Chocolate Lily	Sun to partial shade	Spring wet, summer dry	8"	Summer dormant
<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i> - Oak Fern	Partial shade to shade	Average to wet	6" high, Spreads	Will go dormant early in dry summers

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<i>Iris douglasii</i> - Pacific Coast Iris	Sun to partial shade	Spring wet, summer dry	8"	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Iris inominata</i> - Golden Iris	Sun to partial shade	Spring wet, summer dry	6"-8"	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Lewisia columbiana</i> - Columbia Lewisia	Sun	Lean, well drained	6"	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Lilium columbiana</i> - Western Tiger Lily	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	8"-12"	May go dormant early if dry
<i>Penstemon davidsonii</i> - Davids Penstemon	Sun	Lean, well drained	4"-6", Spreads	Drought tolerant when established
<i>Smilacena stellata</i> - Star flowered Solomon Seal	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	8", Spreads	Will run in rich soil
<i>Smilacena racemosa</i> - Large false Solomon Seal	Sun to partial shade	Rich, well drained	2'-3'	Attractive berries for the birds
<i>Trillium ovatum</i> - Pacific Trillium	Partial shade	Rich, well drained	8"-12"	May go dormant early if dry
<i>Vancouveria hexandra</i> - Inside Out Flower	Partial shade	Rich, well drained	10"-12", spreads	Some drought tolerance when established

Resources:

Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast Pojar & McKinnon
Gardening with Native Plants Arthur Kruckeberg
 Washington Native Plant Society www.wnps.org

