



SOUND
NATIVE
PLANTS

SPECIES SELECTION GUIDE

What plants do you want for your project?

Native species are not created equal when it comes to surviving transplant shock and adapting to a harsh site. Success may depend on choosing species that are not only suited to site conditions but are also hardy and adaptable, capable of handling nutrient poor soil, scarce water and shade, and competitive weeds. This guide suggests only those species we have found most successful and reliable for revegetation. See the first list for our very favorites.

We do not intend this guide to replace site-specific recommendations from an experienced restoration ecologist. We do hope it will help you double-check and refine your species selection. Many species show up on more than one of these lists, so make sure to cross-reference before finalizing your choices.

Remember that these lists indicate site conditions for successful *transplanting*, not necessarily the conditions where you would find established plants. Unless specified, these lists exclude plants that need shade since cover is rare at most planting sites.

Lists

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Restoration superstars

Based on our field experience, a few species stand out as star performers. These are the ones that seem determined to thrive even with some abuse: rough handling, poor soil, more or less water and shade than expected. No plant will guarantee success, but the species on this list are often your best bet.

All are tolerant of full sun. Most also grow rapidly and, in adequate conditions, will put on many inches or even feet every growing season. The fastest growers are indicated in the Comments.

We've listed each species in its ideal spot along the moisture spectrum, but all of the superstars will take moisture fluctuations or overall wetter or drier conditions than indicated. The *most* tolerant species are noted in the comments as "versatile". You get the best results by putting the right plant in the right place, but these plants cut you more slack than most.

	Species		Comments
Wet	Sitka willow	<i>Salix sitchensis</i>	container-grown or stakes
	Hooker's willow	<i>Salix hookeriana</i>	container-grown or stakes
	Pacific willow	<i>Salix lucida</i>	container-grown or stakes
	Slough sedge	<i>Carex obnupta</i>	emergent
	Red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	container-grown only, versatile
	Swamp rose	<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>	fast growing
	Black twinberry	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	fast growing
	Pacific ninebark	<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>	versatile
	Black cottonwood	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	very fast growing
	Red alder	<i>Alnus rubra</i>	very fast growing
V	Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	versatile
	Nootka rose	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	versatile
	Cascara	<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	versatile
	Vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>	slower growing, a survivor
	Big leaf maple	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	fast growing, versatile
	Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	very versatile
	Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	versatile
	Woods strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	herb, versatile
	Western hazel	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	slower growing, a survivor
	Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	versatile
Dry	Coastal strawberry	<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	herb, versatile
	Oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	versatile
	Tall Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	versatile

These are fabulous plants to work with!

Plants for steep slopes/soil erosion control

The best strategy for stabilizing a slope with plants is to establish vegetation at multiple levels—plant trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. A multi-level canopy will do the best job of intercepting and slowing precipitation before it hits the ground, thus reducing surface erosion. Multiple vegetation types also provide both deep and spreading roots which stabilize the entire soil profile.

If maintaining a view is important, plant trees at the edges of the view, space them widely, or prune selectively, but don't leave them out—you can't beat a mature tree for its root system.

The plants recommended here are drought tolerant, except for those with “wet soil” noted in the Comments. Most slopes shouldn't be irrigated, since irrigation can exacerbate soil erosion. These plants are also relatively rapid growers that stabilize soil quickly.

Trees		Comments
Grand fir	<i>Abies grandis</i>	
Big leaf maple	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	
Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	
Cascara	<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	small tree
Pacific willow	<i>Salix lucida</i>	wet soil
Scouler's willow	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	small tree
Shrubs		
Vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>	
Red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	wet soil
Oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	
Indian plum	<i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>	needs shade
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	spreads by suckers
Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	wet soil, likes shade
Hookers willow	<i>Salix hookeriana</i>	wet soil
Sitka willow	<i>Salix sitchensis</i>	wet soil
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	spreads by suckers
Groundcovers		
Kinnikinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	slow to establish
Strawberries	<i>Fragaria vesca, F. chiloensis</i>	<i>chiloensis</i> good in sandy soil
Sword fern	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	needs shade

Plants for very wet sites

Most coastal Pacific Northwest species that grow in or near the water require at least a few months of drying out during the growing season. Only a few emergent species can tolerate saturation year round, and even then standing water must be shallow enough to allow some greenery above the surface.

Water levels can fluctuate widely and conditions can change unpredictably, so you should monitor water levels at the site for a year before planting if you have that luxury. Even with this information, it can be difficult to predict which species will give you the best results at the water's edge, so we recommend selecting a mix of emergents to improve your chances of making a good match.

	Species		Comments
Saturated	Hardstem bulrush	<i>Scirpus acutus</i>	plant in 2-8" of water*
	Tapered rush	<i>Juncus acuminatus</i>	plant in 0-4" of water*
	Beaked sedge	<i>Carex utriculata</i>	shallow water*
	Small-fruited bulrush	<i>Scirpus microcarpus</i>	
	Slough sedge	<i>Carex obnupta</i>	shade tolerant sedge
usually wet (dry in summer)	Sawbeak sedge	<i>Carex stipata</i>	
	Common spikerush	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	
	Shore sedge	<i>Carex lenticularis</i>	
	Pacific willow	<i>Salix lasiandra</i>	
	Sitka willow	<i>Salix sitchensis</i>	
	Hookers willow	<i>Salix hookeriana</i>	plant near salt water
	Oregon ash	<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	
	Red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	forms thickets
	Swamp rose	<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>	forms thickets
	Black twinberry	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	forms thickets
	Dagger-leaf rush	<i>Juncus ensifolius</i>	
	Pacific ninebark	<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>	forms thickets
	Black cottonwood	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	
	Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	
	Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	
	Sitka spruce	<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	
	Reed mannagrass	<i>Glyceria grandis</i>	sod forming in wet meadows

*At lowest water level in the year

We don't recommend planting highly aggressive natives such as Douglas spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*), cattails (*Typha latifolia*), or soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) because they tend to form monocultures. If site conditions suit them, they will probably move in anyway.

Live stakes and cuttings (also wet sites)

Under the right conditions, live stakes are a terrific way to revegetate wet areas with minimal expense and labor. We have found that some species give you better results than others—our native willows and black cottonwood generally are the most successful. These species are also appropriate for brush material and fascines.

This list may help you narrow the field further and decide which species are best for the specific demands of your project. Please contact us for more information on use, ordering, and handling of cuttings.

Species		Comments
Sitka willow	<i>Salix sitchensis</i>	very good rooter, most common willow in south Sound
Pacific willow	<i>Salix lucida</i>	good rooter, brittle/difficult to pound, tree-size
Scouler's willow	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	drier sites, roots dependably but more slowly, tree-size
Hooker willow	<i>Salix hookeriana</i> and <i>Salix hookeriana</i> v. <i>piperi</i>	very good rooter, flexible but brittle, plant near salt water
Geyer willow	<i>Salix geyeriana</i>	good rooter, prefers year-round saturated soil: inundated banks and muddy shores
Black cottonwood	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	good rooter, may grow several feet a year in flood plains
Red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	often lower success rate than willows, put in the shade for highest success, mix with willows for diversity

Other species may work from live stakes, such as snowberry, ninebark, twinberry, salmonberry, and red elderberry, but we would consider them experimental.

Plants for moist sites

There are numerous Pacific Northwest species that favor moist sites. However, “moist” comes in many degrees and variations, from damp to soaking and from steady moisture to fluctuating wet and dry. One person’s “moist” may be very different than another’s.

So we have included only the most versatile and vigorous growers for this list; only the species that can accept a wide range of moist conditions. These plants will tolerate some dry times in the summer, especially if mulched and/or watered for the first few years. They will also tolerate some flooding, although species usually limited to saturated soils are excluded from this list.

There is overlap between this list and the wet lists, as we are following the continuum from wet to dry.

	Species		Comments
Very moist	Red osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	very versatile
	Swamp rose	<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>	
	Black twinberry	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	
	Pacific ninebark	<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>	very versatile
	Black cottonwood	<i>Populus balsamifera</i>	
moderately moist	Red alder	<i>Alnus rubra</i>	very versatile; riparian
	Black hawthorn	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>	
	Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>	needs moisture in summer
	Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	very versatile
	Nootka rose	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	versatile
	Sitka spruce	<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	
	Cascara	<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	good choice for riparian
	Vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>	
	Big leaf maple	<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	
	Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	very versatile
	Red elderberry	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>	
	Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	good choice for riparian, versatile
	Western hazelnut	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	

Plants for dry sites

Sunny, dry sites present extremely challenging conditions for transplanting and success rates are generally low. Sunny, dry sites benefit the most from irrigation. If irrigation is unavailable, plant in the fall and apply mulch for best survival.

It is also critical to choose species that are most likely to hang tough in the midst of the summer drought. These are species typically found in well-drained soil and even recent transplants are somewhat drought tolerant.

Trees		Comments
Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	versatile
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	fast growing
Garry oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i>	slow growing
Shrubs		
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	
Ocean spray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	likes marine bluffs
Tall Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	
Mock orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	
Red-flowering currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	do not over water
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	very versatile
Groundcovers		
Kinnikinnick	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	slow to establish
Coastal strawberry	<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	likes sandy soil
Wild strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	

Plants hard to establish/need extra care

Many favorite Pacific Northwest natives are difficult to establish in restoration sites. They often grow abundantly in forests or on roadsides, but for various reasons don't take well to transplanting into harsh sites. Most of these species require mature soils or shade as they settle in (also see our shade list) and are best suited for enhancement plantings.

We generally recommend *against* using these plants for revegetation, unless you need them to serve a specific purpose. If you want to include them, we propose the following treatments.

Trees		Treatments
Pacific madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	Assume large transplanting losses, don't over water
Bitter cherry	<i>Prunus emarginata</i>	Assume losses to disease
Pacific flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus nuttallii</i>	Assume losses to disease, plant at an edge with stem in shade
Shrubs/vines		
Red huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium parvifolium</i>	Plant in shade, mulch with wood chips, irrigate but don't over water
Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	Plant in shade, mulch, irrigate
Orange honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera ciliosa</i>	Assume transplanting losses
Red-flowering currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	Plant only in well drained soils, don't over water
Pacific rhododendron	<i>R. macrophyllum</i>	Mulch, shade, irrigate, be patient for it to grow
Groundcovers		
Herbaceous groundcovers		Plant in shade, mulch lightly, irrigate, suppress weed competition
Bunchberry	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	Incorporate composted wood into soil, plant in cool, shaded spot
Twinflower	<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	Plant in dry shade, mulch lightly

If you've figured out a way to get consistently good results on restoration sites with any of these, please let us know!

Plants that need shade

The salal and sword fern that you see growing in clear cuts were originally growing under tree cover. Only with a mature root system do they flourish in full sun. If you are determined to put these species out in the open, expect losses and give them special care such as mulching with wood chips and irrigation during the summer drought.

Trees		Comments
Western hemlock	<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	plant on the northeast side of a shading plant or use shade screen
Western red cedar	<i>Thuja plicata</i>	
Shrubs		
Red huckleberry	<i>Vaccinium parvifolium</i>	very sun sensitive, hard to establish
Bald-hip rose	<i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	does well in shade
Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	slow grower
Salal	<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	slow grower
Indian plum	<i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>	does well in shade
Pacific rhododendron	<i>R. macrophyllum</i>	slow grower
Groundcovers		
Sword fern	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	does well in shade
Most herbaceous groundcovers!		most also need mature soil, rich in organic matter

Deer resistant plants

There is no such thing as a deer-*proof* plant. Deer are adaptable creatures, and they may choose to eat any species if it is easily available to them and they are hungry. However, you can choose species that at least are not their favorites.

Trees		Comments
Grand fir	<i>Abies grandis</i>	
Oregon ash	<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	
Sitka spruce	<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	
Shore pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>	
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	
Garry oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i>	
Cascara	<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>	
Western red cedar	<i>Thuja plicata</i>	needs shade
Western hemlock	<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	needs shade
Shrubs		
Vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>	
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	
Beaked hazelnut	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	
Salal	<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	needs shade
Tall Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i>	
Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	needs shade
Pacific wax-myrtle	<i>Myrica californica</i>	
Indian plum	<i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>	needs shade
Mock orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	
Straggly gooseberry	<i>Ribes divaricatum</i>	
Red-flowering currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	
Bald-hip Rose	<i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	
Nootka rose	<i>Rosa nutkana</i>	
Swamp rose	<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>	
Red elderberry	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>	
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	
Huckleberries	<i>Vaccinium spp.</i>	most need shade
Ground covers		
Kinnikinnik	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	
Bleeding heart	<i>Dicentra formosa</i>	needs shade
Strawberries	<i>Fragaria spp.</i>	
Piggyback plant	<i>Tolmiea menziesii</i>	needs shade