

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 that stabilize the entire soil profile. 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 rapid growers that stabilize soil quickly, except as noted.

Trees		
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>	Prefers shade and moisture
Red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Wet soil in winter and spring
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 chiloensis</i>	Good in sandy soil
Sword fern	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	Needs shade