

Current inventory may include species not on this list—please inquire.

Groundcovers and Perennials



Aquilegia formosa Red columbine

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Soil moisture: moist, well-drained okay, dry soil in shade okay

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: moderate

Form: perennial herb to 3 feet, with taproot

Red columbine grows in moist, open sites or in partial shade on the edge of woodlands. It may spread by seed, but generally doesn't compete well with invasives. It is a nectar plant for hummingbirds.

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Kinnikinnik

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Soil moisture: moist to dry, well-drained

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: slow until established

Form: evergreen shrub or groundcover to 8 inches, mat forming,

Once established, kinnikinnik withstands drought and full sun exposure and does best in coarse, low-nutrient soils. It is not competitive on richer sites. It is slow to start growing, so plant densely or intermix with a fast grower if quick coverage is important. After a year or two, kinnikinnik will spread more rapidly to form mats. We often recommend this species for erosion control projects in full sun. An important food plant for wildlife. "Kinnikinnik" is the longest palindrome in the English language!



GROUNDCOVERS & PERENNIALS

***Aruncus dioicus (sylvestris)* Goat's beard**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist, dry in shade okay

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: herbaceous perennial to 6 feet, short rhizomes, separate male and female plants

Goat's beard has attributes that may serve you well on restoration sites: it transplants fine, tolerates some sun, and is much larger than most of our native perennials so it's less likely to get lost or stepped on. Seeds are food for song birds.

***Asarum caudatum* Wild ginger**

Exposure: partial shade to deep shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: slow

Form: evergreen perennial, mat forming to 10 inches, from thick rhizomes and woody stem

Wild ginger requires shade and soil rich in organic matter. It may not grow noticeably for a year or so following transplanting, but once established it begins to spread moderately by rhizomes. It is common under western red cedar. We consider this a species for enhancement projects, not for revegetating open sites.

***Athyrium filix-femina* Lady fern**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: wet to moist

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: moderate to high

Form: deciduous fern with fronds to 6 feet, from stout rhizomes

With ample moisture, lady fern is a vigorous grower; it is common on mucky streamside terraces. With very moist soil and fall installation, it may tolerate full sun.

***Camassia quamash* Common camas**

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Soil moisture: moist to dry, well-drained

Transplanting success: unknown

Growth rate: moderate **Form:** herb to 25 inches, from a deep bulb

Common camas is abundant in meadows of western Washington, most typically in the prairies formed on gravelly glacial soils. For best results, outplant in the fall when camas is dormant—bulbs generally don't transplant well when disturbed during the growing-season.

***Dicentra formosa* Bleeding heart**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist, dry in shade okay

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: soft herbaceous perennial to 20 inches, from slender, fleshy rhizomes

Bleeding heart needs soil rich in organic matter to really shine—given moist, fluffy soil, this plant will spread rapidly. In poorer soil, bleeding heart will do reasonably well, as long as it is protected from the sun. Bleeding heart can provide food and nectar for wildlife.

Fragaria chiloensis* Coastal strawberry*Exposure:** full sun to partial shade**Soil moisture:** moist to dry**Transplanting success:** high**Growth rate:** rapid**Form:** leathery, somewhat evergreen perennial to 10 inches, spreads by runners

Very successful in coarse, poor soils characteristic of the early stages of restoration. It is competitive in disturbed, weedy sites and grows vigorously through the winter following fall planting in the Puget Sound area. It generally grows on sand dunes and sea bluffs, and it is well adapted to droughty, exposed conditions. We recommend it for erosion control projects because it spreads quickly and anchors the surface layer.

Fragaria vesca* Woodland strawberry*Exposure:** full sun to shade**Soil moisture:** moist**Transplanting success:** high**Growth rate:** rapid**Form:** herbaceous perennial to 12 inches, spreads by runners

Woodland strawberry will accept a fairly wide range of soil and light conditions, from dry soil in shaded areas to moist soil in the open sun. It spreads very quickly, and if the soil is rich, it will grow lushly to provide good cover and weed suppression. Fruit is eaten by birds and small mammals (and humans if they're quick enough).

Gaultheria shallon* Salal*Exposure:** partial shade to deep shade**Soil moisture:** moist to dry**Transplanting success:** medium to high if shaded, low if not**Growth rate:** slow until established**Form:** evergreen shrub 2-5 feet, sometimes more; very shallow and fibrous root system, spreads vigorously by underground stems once well established

Salal does not like to be transplanted. For best results, plant into shade or partial shade and add woody mulch. If planted into full sun, it will require a lot of babying to survive. Once transplanted, salal generally remains small for a few years following planting as it becomes established. When it begins its more typical, rampant growth, it may require regular pruning to maintain it as a "groundcover". It generally grows to around three feet at maturity, except in the wettest coastal climates where it may tower overhead.

Hydrophyllum tenuipes* Pacific waterleaf*Exposure:** partial shade to shade**Soil moisture:** moist**Transplanting success:** high**Growth rate:** moderate to rapid**Form:** herbaceous perennial to 30 inches, from short, thick rhizome and fleshy roots

Waterleaf is common in moist, open forests in the lowlands. We have seen it spread copiously, once established. This species must be planted in shade and will benefit from a light application of organic mulch (not more than an inch).



GROUNDCOVERS & PERENNIALS

***Linnaea borealis* Twinflower**

Exposure: partial shade to deep shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: low to medium

Growth rate: moderate

Form: semi-woody evergreen to 4 inches, with long, leafy runners

We have found twinflower somewhat difficult to transplant successfully—it may rot if too wet or get crispy if too dry. Twinflower does well in shaded, organically rich habitats, free of invasives. It does not compete well with weeds.

***Mahonia (Berberis) nervosa* Low Oregon grape**

Exposure: shade

Soil moisture: moist to dry

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: slow

Form: evergreen shrub to 2 feet; taproot, spreads by underground stems

The common names “long-leafed”, “low”, and “dull” all apply to this one species of Oregon grape! Its needs are very different from tall Oregon grape. It requires shade to survive transplanting, and on drier or nutrient-poor soils, organic mulch such as wood chips is advised. We have found this species difficult to establish except as an understory planting.

***Maianthemum dilatatum* False lily-of-the-valley**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist, dry in shade okay

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: herbaceous perennial (somewhat evergreen) to 12 inches, from branching rhizomes

False lily-of-the-valley does not like being in a pot, but once released into the soil, it spreads abundantly. For best results, with this species and many other native perennials, plant in at least partial shade and top-dress lightly with organic mulch.

***Mimulus guttatus* Yellow monkey-flower**

Exposure: full sun to partial shade

Soil moisture: wet, well-drained okay

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: moderate

Form: herbaceous perennial or annual to 30 inches, from creeping stolons and rhizomes

This species is found along streams, in wet meadow, seeps, and other wet places. It does not require rich soil, but does need a steady supply of moisture. It spreads well by seed.

***Oxalis oregana* Wood sorrel**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist to dry

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: herbaceous perennial to 6 inches, from rhizomes

Wood sorrel spreads very well once established. It will tolerate fairly dry soil if planted in the shade. It is one of our most robust groundcovers, but still has trouble in open, weedy sites.



GROUNDCOVERS & PERENNIALS

***Polystichum munitum* Sword fern**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist to dry

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: moderate

Form: evergreen fern with fronds to 5 feet, woody rhizomes

We often see sword fern planted in full sun, but transplants usually don't survive in the open unless there is ample soil moisture. However, with suitable conditions this plant will thrive with little or no care after planting; it is highly successful when planted in partial or full shade and mulched. Sword fern is also tough and competitive against invasive species once established.

***Smilacina (Maianthemum) racemosa* False Solomon's seal**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: moderate

Form: herbaceous perennial to 3 feet, from stout rhizomes

False Solomon's seal is found in moist forests and on stream banks in mature soils. Unless it will be receiving irrigation, transplant at the end of the growing season, in September through November. We consider false Solomon's seal and other lilies for enhancement projects, rather than for revegetating open sites.

***Smilacina (Maianthemum) stellata* Starry false Solomon's seal**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: moderate

Form: herbaceous perennial to 20 inches, from thin rhizomes

Starry false Solomon's seal grows in similar habitats to false Solomon's seal, sometimes in slightly drier (or better-drained) substrates. For best results, transplant in the fall or provide irrigation and put it into rich soil.

***Tellima grandiflora* Fringecup**

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: moderate

Form: herbaceous perennial to 30 inches, with short rhizomes

One of our customers says that this is the toughest flowering upland herb he knows: it competes with invasive species and tolerates disturbed soil and drought. For best results in full sun, provide an inch of mulch and some irrigation. This species transplants well and spreads well from seed.



GROUNDCOVERS & PERENNIALS

Thalictrum occidentale Western meadowrue

Exposure: full sun to shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: herbaceous perennial to 2 feet, from fleshy rhizomes, separate male and female plants

Our native meadowrue grows and spreads vigorously in fluffy, rich soil, but it also will tolerate less ideal soil as long as some moisture and an inch of mulch are available through the summer.

Tolmiea menziesii Piggyback plant

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist to wet

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: rapid

Form: herbaceous perennial to 30 inches tall, from well-developed rhizomes

Piggyback plant is very common along streamsides, wetland edges, and moist forests. It requires plentiful moisture and some shade. Given these conditions, it can establish itself quickly and spread.

Vancouveria hexandra Inside-out flower

Exposure: partial shade to shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: high

Growth rate: moderate

Form: herbaceous perennial to 10 inches, from rhizomes

Inside-out flower spreads extensively in fertile, mature soils. We advise planting it in at least partial shade and, if soils are poor in organic matter, mulching lightly with wood chips.

Viola sempervirens Evergreen violet

Exposure: partial shade to deep shade

Soil moisture: moist

Transplanting success: medium

Growth rate: slow

Form: evergreen perennial to 3 inches, from scaly rhizomes, mat forming

Evergreen violet will tolerate fairly dry conditions in the shade. It is tricky to transplant successfully, but once it has put down roots, it will flower frequently and spread by seed.