

NBB Habitat-friendly Plants for Residential Landscapes

The plants on this list have been selected because they are kind to the environment, generally well-behaved in smaller urban or suburban gardens, and pretty enough for ornamental value. Critical selection criteria was drought tolerance, erosion control, and providing good habitat for birds, pollinators, beneficial insects and wildlife in general. These things have been deemed helpful in achieving and maintaining good watershed health as well.

Of course, there are many more native plants available, but many aren't all that friendly to small residential landscapes for a variety of reasons. Similarly, there are more ornamental plants available. Feel free to add other plants to your garden after using this list to create a good environmentally-friendly base. Just be careful that what you choose is water-wise, non-invasive, and the right plant for the right place.

SMALLER TREES

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Deciduous/ Evergreen | Sun Exposure | Mature Height / Width | Native | Drought- Tolerant | Erosion Control* | Host For ** | Flower Color / Bloom Time / Foliage Color / Fall Foliage Color / Fruit, Nuts, Seeds, Cones / Comments |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| <i>Acer circinatum</i> | Vine Maple | D | PtSh – Sh | 10–20' x 20' | Y | Y/N | Y dp,sh | B,Bf,H,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Orange-Red / Y / taller, more spread out in shade; shorter, more dense in full sun; cultivars vary in size and coloration |
| <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i> | Incense Cedar | E | Su | 50–75' x 15' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,Bf | / / Green / Green / Y / could be much larger in wild; though very tall, it's not very wide, and fits into many residential situations |
| <i>Chamaecyparis nootkatensis</i> | Alaska Weeping Cedar | E | Su – Sh | cultivars vary | Y | Y | Y sh | W | / / Green / Green / Y / some cultivars very slender, but tall |
| <i>Cornus kousa</i> | Kousa Dogwood | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | N | N | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr-Sum / Green, Varigated / Reds / Y / |
| <i>Crataegus crus-galli 'inermis'</i> | Cockspur Hawthorn | D | Su | 15–25' x 10–20' | N | Y/N | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Oranges / Y / thornless |
| <i>Picea pungens</i> | Colorado Blue Spruce | E | Su | cultivars vary | N | Y | N | B,Bf,I,P,W | / / Silver-blue / Silver-blue / Y / |
| <i>Rhamnus purshiana</i> | Cascara | D | Su – PtSh | 25–35' x 15–20' | Y | Y/N | Y dp | B,H,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Yellow-orange / Y / |
| <i>Tsuga mertensiana</i> | Mountain Hemlock | E | Su | cultivars vary | Y | Y | Y dp | B,W | / / Green / Green / Y / some cultivars slender and tidy |

LARGER TREES

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Deciduous/ Evergreen | Sun Exposure | Mature Height / Width | Native | Drought- Tolerant | Erosion Control* | Host For ** | Flower Color / Bloom Time / Foliage Color / Fall Foliage Color / Fruit, Nuts, Seeds, Cones / Comments |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| <i>Acer macrophyllum</i> | Big Leaf Maple | D | Su – PtSh | 100' x 50' | Y | Y | Y dp | I,P,W | Green-white / Spr / Green / Yellow / Y / could be much larger in wild |
| <i>Arbutus menziesii</i> | Pacific Madrone | E | Su | 35' x 25' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,H,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / could be much larger in wild; requires exceedingly good drainage (gravelly) on a slope is preferred |
| <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i> | Incense Cedar | E | Su | 50–75' x 15' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,Bf | / / Green / Green / Y / could be much larger in wild |
| <i>Chamaecyparis nootkatensis</i> | Alaska Weeping Cedar | E | Su – Sh | cultivars vary | Y | Y | Y sh | W | / / Green / Green / Y / some cultivars very slender, but tall |
| <i>Cornus nuttallii</i> | Pacific Dogwood | D | Su – PtSh | 30–45' x 20–30' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Reds / Y / could be much larger in wild |
| <i>Picea pungens</i> | Colorado Blue Spruce | E | Su | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | / / Silver / Silver / Y / |
| <i>Pinus contorta</i> | Shore Pine | E | Su | 40–50' x 25–30' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,W | / / Green / Green / N / |
| <i>Quercus spp</i> | Oak | D | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y/N | Y dp | B,I,P,W | Yellow / Spr / Green / Yellow / Y / particularly <i>Quercus garryana</i> |

SHRUBS

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Deciduous/ Evergreen | Sun Exposure | Mature Height / Width | Native | Drought- Tolerant | Erosion Control* | Host For** | Flower Color / Bloom Time / Foliage Color / Fall Foliage Color / Fruit, Nuts, Seeds, Cones / Comments |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|---|
| Amelanchier alnifolia | Serviceberry | D | Su – PtSh | 12–20' x 14' | Y | Y | Y md | H,I,P | White / Spr / Green / Red-orange / Y / don't plant near juniper |
| Arctostaphylos spp | Manzanita | E | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,H,I,P | White / Spr / Gray-green / Gray-green / Y / |
| Ceanothus thrysiflorus | Wild Lilac | E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,H,I,P | Blue / Spr / Green / Green / N / best to avoid heavy pruning |
| Cornus alba or sericea | Red-twig Dogwood | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y/N | Y sh | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green, Varieg / Reds, Yellows / Y / most colorful cultivars can easily be pruned to be a good landscape size |
| Garrya elliptica | Silktassel | E | PtSu–PtSh | 10–12' x 10–12' | Y | Y/N | Y | B,Bf,I,P,W | Purple-gray / / Green / Green / Y / interesting dangling catkins in winter |
| Gaultheria shallon | Salal | E | Su – Sh | 1–5' x sprdg | Y | Y | Y md,dp | Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / taller, more spread out in shade; shorter, more dense in full sun; suckering to make thickets |
| Holodiscus discolor | Oceanspray | D | PtSu – PtSh | 8–16' or more | Y | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,H,I,P,W | White / Spr-Sum / Green / Yellow-Orange / Y / nice fragrance |
| Hydrangea quercifolia | Oakleaf Hydrangea | D | PtSu – PtSh | cultivars vary | N | Y/N | Y sh | B,Bf,P | White / Spr-Sum / Green / Multi / Y / cultivars vary in size; more drought-tolerant in shade w/ good soil & mulch |
| Lavendula spp | Lavender | E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y sh,md | Bf,H,I,P | Blues, whites, pink / Spr-Sum / Green, silver / Green, silver / N / |
| Mahonia spp | Oregon Grape | E | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y | Y | Y md | Bf,H,I,P | Yellow / Spr / Green / Green-Bronze / cultivars vary in size |
| Myrica californica | California Wax Myrtle | E | Su – PtSu | 10–15' x 6–10' | Y | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr-Sum / Green / Green / Y / fixes nitrogen; larger in wild |
| Philadelphus lewisii | Mock Orange | D | Su | 6–12' x 6–8' | Y | Y | Y md | Bf,H,I,W | White / Spr-Sum / Green / Yellow / Y / can get larger in wild |
| Physocarpus spp | Ninebark | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green, Yell, Cppr, Blk / Varies / Y / cultivars vary in size; named cultivars are much tidier than the true native |
| Picea pungens | Colorado Blue Spruce | E | Su | cultivars vary | Y | Y | N | B,Bf,I,P,W | / / Silver-blue / Silver-blue / Y / |
| Ribes spp | Currant / Gooseberry | D | Su – Sh | cultivars vary | Y | Y/N | Y md | B,Bf,H,I,P,W | Wh, Pnk, Red / Spr / Green / Yellow / Y / |
| Rosa gymnocarpa | Bald-hip Rose | D | Su | 3–6' x 3–6' | N | Y | Y md | B,Bf,I,P,W | Pink / Spr / Green / Yellow / Y / hips hang on a long time in winter |
| Rosa nutkana | Nootka Rose | D | Su – PtSu | 3–6' x sprdg | Y | N | Y md | B,Bf,I,P,W | Pink / Spr / Green / Yellow / Y / vigorous spreader; hips hang on a long time in winter |
| Rosemarinus officinalis | Rosemary | E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y | Bf,H,I,P,W | Blue / Spr / Green / Green / / |
| Sambucus spp | Elderberry | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y dp | B,Bf,H,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green, Blk / Oranges, Reds / Y / most ornamental are Sambucus nigra cultivars with black foliage |
| Symphoricarpos albus | Snowberry | D | PtSh – Sh | 3–6' x 3–6' | Y | Y | Y md | B,H,I,P | Pink / Spr / Green / Yellowish / Y / white berries hang on in winter |
| Vaccinium ovatum | Evergreen Huckleberry | E | Su – Sh | 4–12' x 5–6' | Y | Y | Y md | B,H,I,P | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / copper tips in spring; taller, more spread out in shade; shorter, more dense in full sun |
| Vaccinium parvifolium | Red Huckleberry | D | Su – PtSh | 10' x 6' | Y | Y/N | Y md | B,H,I,P,W | Pink / Spr / Green / Red / Y / |

PERENNIALS

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Deciduous/ Evergreen | Sun Exposure | Mature Height / Width | Native | Drought- Tolerant | Erosion Control* | Host For ** | Flower Color / Bloom Time / Foliage Color / Fall Foliage Color / Fruit, Nuts, Seeds, Cones / Comments |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|--|
| Achillea spp | Yarrow | D | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y sh | B,I,P | Varies / Spr-Sum / Green, Gray / Yellow / Y / many flower colors; only some are evergreen |
| Agastache spp | Hummingbird Mint | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y | B,Bf,H,I,P | Varied / Spr-Sum / Green / Yellow / Y / many flower colors |
| Anaphalis margaritacea | Pearly Everlasting | D | Su | 2–3' x 2' | Y | Y | Y sh | Bf,I,P | White / Sum-Fll / Silver-gray / Yellow / Y / |
| Aquilegia formosa | Western Red Columbine | D | Su – PtSh | 2–3' x 18" | Y | N | Y sh | B,Bf,H,I,P | Orange / Spr / Green / Y / |
| Asclepias speciosa | Showy Milkweed | D | Su – PtSu | 2–6' x 2–3' | Y | Y | N | B,Bf,H,I,P | Pink / Sum-Fll / Green / Yellow / Y / for monarch butterfly; listed here with reservation because can spread via rhizome & reseed; rough looking |
| Aster spp | Aster | D | Su – PtSu | species vary | Y | Y/N | Y sh | Bf,I,P | Blue, Pink / Spr, Fll / Green / Yellow / Y / there are both short and tall asters |
| Delphinium spp | Larkspur | D | Su – PtSh | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y/N | Y | Bf,H,I,P | Blue, White / Sum / Green / Yellow / / some are native here; only somewhat drought-tolerant |
| Deschampsia cespitosa | Tufted Hairgrass | E | Su – PtSu | 1–3' x 1–3' | Y | Y/N | Y sh | B,Bf,W | / / Green / Green / Y / 'Northern Lights' is a particularly beautiful cultivar |
| Dicentra formosa | Pacific Bleeding Heart | D | PtSh | 6–12" x 1–3' | Y | Y/N | Y sh | B,Bf,H,P | Pink / Spr / Blue-green / Yellow / Y / Dicentra spectabilis is a more glamorous non-native cousin |
| Echinacea purpurea | Coneflower | D | Su – PtSh | 2–4' x 2' | N | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,H | Varies / Sum-Fll / Green / Yellow / Y / many flower colors that vary in size |
| Gaillardia aristata | Indian Blanketflower | D | Su – PtSu | 1–2' x 1–2' | N | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,I,P | Yellow-Red / Spr-Fll / Green / Yellow / Y / deadhead to keep flowers coming through fall; many cultivars; host to pest insects that are the food of beneficial insects |
| Heuchera spp | Coral Bells | E | PtSh – Sh | cultivars vary | Y/N | N | Y sh | Bf,H,I,P | Varies / Spr-Fll / Varies / Varies / N / usually evergreen here, but can defoliate in a very cold winter; not drought-tolerant, but good mulching and planting in shade can produce good results |
| Penstemon davidsonii | Davidson's Penstemon | E | Su – Pt Sh | 2–5" x sprdg | Y | Y | Y | H,I,P | Purple / Sum / Green / Green / / mat-forming habit |
| Polystichum munitum | Sword Fern | E | PtSh – Sh | 2–3' x 2–3' | Y | Y | Y md | Bf,I,W | / / Green / Green / N / |
| Sedum | Stonecrop | D/E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,I,P | Wht,Pnk, Yel / Spr, Sum, Fll / Varies / Varies / Y / so many great cultivars in a wide array of sizes, colors, leaf shapes; great tapestry |
| Sempervivum | Chicks 'n' Hens | E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y | Bf,P | Varies / Sum / Varies / Varies / Y / partners well with sedums above |
| Zauschneria californica (Epilobium californica) | California Fuchsia | D/E | Su | 1–2' x 2–3' | N | Y | Y | Bf,H | Red-Orange / Spr-Fll / Gray-green / Gray-green / / semi-evergreen |

GROUND COVERS

| Botanical Name | Common Name | Deciduous/ Evergreen | Sun Exposure | Mature Height / Width | Native | Drought- Tolerant | Erosion Control* | Host For** | Flower Color / Bloom Time / Foliage Color / Fall Foliage Color / Fruit, Nuts, Seeds, Cones / Comments |
|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| Arctostaphylos uva-ursi | Kinnickinnick | E | Su – PtSh | 2–4" x sprdg | Y | Y | Y md | B,Bf,H,I,P | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / |
| Asarum caudatum | Wild Ginger | D/E | PtSh – Sh | 6–8" x sprdg | Y | N | Y sh | Bf, I,P | Purp-brwn / Spr / Green / Green / N / can take short drought |
| Fragaria chiloensis | Beach Strawberry | E | Su – PtSh | 4" – sprdg | Y | Y | Y sh | B,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / |
| Gaultheria procumbens | Creeping Salal | E | PtSh – Sh | 6–12" x sprdg | Y | Y | Y sh | Bf,I,P,W | White / Spr / Green / Green / Y / |
| Mahonia nervosa Mahonia repens | Cascades Oregon Grape Creeping Oregon Grape | E E | PtSh – Sh Su – Sh | 18–24" x sprdg 12–24" x sprdg | Y Y | Y Y | Y md Y md | B,H,I,P,W B,H,I,P,W | Yellow / Spr / Green / Green-Bronze / Y / m. nervosa resembles fern in shape |
| Penstemon davidsonii | Davidson's Penstemon | E | Su – Pt Sh | 2–5" x sprdg | Y | Y | Y | H,I,P | Purple / Sum / Green / Green / / mat-forming habit |
| Polystichum munitum | Sword Fern | E | PtSh – Sh | 2–3' x 2–3' | Y | Y | Y md | Bf,I,W | / / Green / Green / N / |
| Sedum | Stonecrop | D/E | Su –PtSu | cultivars vary | Y/N | Y | Y sh | B,Bf,I,P | Wht,Pnk,Yel / Spr, Sum, Fl / Varies / Varies / Y / so many great cultivars in a wide array of sizes, colors, leaf shapes; great tapestry |
| Sempervivum | Chicks 'n' Hens | E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y | Bf,P | Varies / Sum / Varies / Varies / Y / partners well with sedums above |
| Thymus spp | Thyme | D/E | Su – PtSu | cultivars vary | N | Y | Y | B,Bf,P | Varies / Spr-Sum / Varies / Varies / / mat-forming habit |

* Erosion control **Y**=Yes, **N**=No. Root depth indicated as follows: **dp**=Deep, **md**=Medium, **sh**=Shallow

** Habitat indicated as follows: **B**=Birds, **Bf**=Butterflies, **H**=Hummingbirds, **I**=Beneficial Insects, **P**=Pollinators, **W**=Wildlife in general

Notes for understanding the information in plant list.

Native: For the purposes of this plant list, if a plant is native to the PNW, it's cultivars will also be deemed native so long as they grow essentially the same as the native relative are not invasive, and provide the same habitat and other beneficial qualities as does the relative plant. If a plant is listed as Y/N, it means there is at least one species of that genus that is native here, and there are also species or named cultivars that are not native, but they are suitable for use.

'Spp' next to botanical name: For some plants, more than one species is suitable for the purpose of this list. Ex: Arctostaphylos spp means there are several species of Arctostaphylos which would be suitable. Read the plant tags and choose whichever one you like that is the right plant for the right place in your garden.

Deciduous/Evergreen: Occasionally you'll see D/E noted. This could mean that some of the species or cultivars are evergreen while others are not. It could mean that the plant is 'mostly' evergreen in our zone, but might defoliate in hard winters.

As always, read the plant tags before purchasing any plant.

'Cultivars Vary': For some plants there may be more than one suitable cultivar to the species listed. Ex: Cornus kousa has several named cultivars that would all be suitable. I have used the term cultivars on this list interchangeable with species just because it used less space. Read the plant tags and choose whichever one you like that is the right plant for the right place in your garden.

Plant listed in more than one category: Some plants are found in more than one section of these lists. Example: Picea pungens (Colorado Blue Spruce) is in trees, large trees, and shrubs because there are many different sized cultivars that fit into those various categories.

Sun Exposure / Size Relationship: Some plants may grow taller or shorter in sun or shade than it would in the opposite exposure. Under Mature Height / Width you'll see a range in height showing that variation. And generally, there will be a comment in the last column about this exposure/size relationship.

PLEASE, READ PLANT TAGS BEFORE PURCHASING ANY PLANT! The information on the tag may not be a perfect guarantee of what you are buying. Yes, mistakes happen at nurseries and growers. But it's a good start on the side of choosing the right plant for the right place in your garden. I very often shop first with my plant list and my camera. I take a photo of the plant I'm interested in and that plant's label (both sides if necessary), so I can go home and Google for further information about the suitability of the plant. Make sure you have made the best plant selections possible, then go back and purchase.



Researched & prepared by Beth Goodnight, May 2015.
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