



FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS FOR HOME LANDSCAPES

*Selecting plants that may reduce
your risk from wildfire*



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Fire-resistant Plants for Home Landscapes

Selecting plants that may reduce your risk from wildfire

Protecting your family and home

In the Pacific Northwest, fires are a natural part of the changing landscape. As homeowners continue to build in the wildland-urban interface, they must take special precautions to protect their lives, homes, and property.

One way to do this is to create a defensible space around your home. This is the area between your home or other structures,

where potential fuel (materials or vegetation) have been modified, reduced, or cleared to create a barrier and slow the spread of wildfire toward your home. A defensible space also allows room for firefighters to fight the fire safely.

Three critical steps in creating a defensible space include using fire-resistant building materials (for example, roofing materials), reducing wildland fuels around the home, and using fire-resistant plant material in the landscape.

These actions DO NOT ensure that your home will survive a wildfire, but they substantially increase the chances.

Taking action

When landscaping around a home, most homeowners are interested in creating a landscape that is aesthetically pleasing, complements their home, and has variations in color, texture, flowers, and foliage. When selecting plants, you also should consider the flammability of plants



Figure 1.—A fuel break that includes fire-resistant plants can help protect your home by reducing and blocking intense heat.

(i.e., fuel), particularly if your home is located in or adjacent to a forest or rangeland.

Homeowners should take active steps to minimize or reduce the fuel and fire hazard around their homes, including the use of fire-resistant plants in the landscape. Equally important is proper plant placement, plant spacing, and ongoing plant maintenance. These practices, when combined, can create a fuel break and help protect your home by blocking intense heat (see Figure 1).

Flammable plant material in your landscape can increase the fire risk directly around your home. The 1991 Oakland Hills fire in California is a prime example of how flammable plant material (Eucalyptus trees) can act as fuel and contribute to the intensity of a wildfire. More than 3,000 homes were destroyed in that devastating wildfire.

What are fire-resistant plants?

Fire-resistant plants are those that do not readily ignite from a flame or other ignition sources. These plants can be damaged or even killed by fire; however, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fuel and, therefore, the fire's intensity. There are several other significant factors that influence the fire characteristics of plants, including plant moisture content, age, total volume, dead material, and chemical content.

Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof

Plants that are fire-resistant have the following characteristics:

- Leaves are moist and supple.
- Plants have little dead wood and tend not to accumulate dry, dead material within the plant.
- Sap is water-like and does not have a strong odor.
- Sap or resin materials are low.

Most deciduous trees and shrubs are fire-resistant.

In contrast, plants that are **highly flammable** generally have several of these characteristics:

- Contain fine, dry, or dead material within the plant, such as twigs, needles, and leaves.
- Leaves, twigs, and stems contain volatile waxes, terpenes, or oils.
- Leaves are aromatic (strong odor when crushed).



Figure 2.—Juniper is one example of a highly flammable plant, due to the accumulation of old, dead needles within the plant (see inset photo) and volatile oils in the foliage.

- Sap is gummy, resinous, and has a strong odor.
- May have loose or papery bark.

Both native and ornamental plants can be highly flammable. An example of a highly flammable shrub often planted in home landscapes is spreading or upright juniper (see Figure 2). Avoid landscaping with highly flammable plants directly around your home.

Adapted from University of California Cooperative Extension Hortscript, 1996, No. 18.

Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!



Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.

Selecting fire-resistant plants

There is a wide array of trees and other plants from which to choose that are both attractive and fire-resistant. This publication provides a diverse list of plant material divided into perennials, groundcovers, trees, and shrubs. The plants in this publication are adaptable to several regions in the Pacific Northwest and other western states. Check with your local Extension office or a nursery to find out which plants are adaptable to your area.

Annuals

Annuals (see Figure 3) can be part of a fire-resistant landscape if well watered and well maintained. We have not listed each of these due to the large number of annuals available to the homeowner.



Figure 3.—Annuals can be part of a fire-resistant landscape if well watered and well maintained.



Figure 4.—A well-maintained lawn can be included in a fire-resistant landscape and serves as an effective fuel break.

Turf

A well-maintained lawn can be included in a fire-resistant landscape and serves as an effective fuel break (see Figure 4). For more information on lawn care and maintenance, ask for publications from your local Extension office.

you landscape with bark mulch up against your home, make sure it remains moist to prevent ignition. You may also consider using less flammable types of mulch, such as gravel or decorative rock, or a combination of wood bark mulch and decorative rock (see Figure 5).

A caution about decorative bark mulch

Bark mulch is often used in home landscapes. However, firebrands from a wildfire or cigarettes can ignite dry bark mulch, conveying the fire to your home. If



Figure 5.—A combination of wood bark mulch surrounded by decorative rock is less flammable than wood bark mulch alone, and it will not scorch plants.

A note about hardiness zones

When you are selecting plant material for your landscape, be sure to choose plants that are adaptable to your area and right for your hardiness zone. *Hardiness* refers to the ability of a plant to withstand an average minimum temperature. Often a plant catalog or plant tag (see Figure 6) will indicate hardiness zone followed by a number. This number is based upon the hardiness zones derived from a map developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prepared a map based on the average annual minimum temperatures recorded throughout North America from 1974 through 1986.

There are 11 designated zones, with zone 1 being the coldest (requiring the most cold-hardy plants) and zone 11 being the warmest (suitable for plants not



Figure 6.—Example of a plant tag, which includes hardiness zone along with other plant characteristics.

tolerant of cold temperatures). These zones are broken down further into parts “a” and “b” for even greater accuracy. Each zone has a designated approximate range of average annual minimum temperatures. For example, zone 9 is 20°–30°F. When choosing a plant, you want to pick a plant that falls within your zone or the next colder zone. For example, if you are in USDA zone 5, buy plants for zones 3, 4, or 5.

There are other climate zones and hardiness maps besides the USDA’s, but these are not utilized universally as is the USDA hardiness zone map. Hardiness ratings or zones are meant to be used only as a guide, not as an absolute for plant selection and survivability.

Numerous other factors contribute to whether or not a plant will survive, including soil type, rainfall, heat tolerance, and exposure to wind and sun.

Remember to think about the microclimates that exist in your community and your own backyard. Check with your local Extension office or a garden center to find the correct hardiness zone for your area. This information will assist you in buying more adaptable plant material for your landscape.

To view the USDA hardiness zone map, go to: <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>.

For further information, check out these websites:

FireFree: <http://www.firefree.org>

Firewise: <http://www.firewise.org>

Landscape Plants, OSU: <http://oregonstate.edu/dept/ldplants/>

University of Idaho Extension: <http://www.uidaho.edu/extension/>

Oregon Department of Forestry: <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/>

Oregon State University Extension Service: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/index.php>

OSU Extension Service, Deschutes County: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/deschutes/>

Plant Links—USDA: <http://plants.nrcs.usda.gov/links.html>

USDA Hardiness Zone Map: <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>

Washington State Department of Natural Resources: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/base/dnrhome.html>

Washington State University Extension: <http://ext.wsu.edu/>

How this plant list was developed











This plant list was developed by evaluating existing scientific literature on fire-resistant plants and plant flammability. Included in this list are plants adapted to grow in either irrigated or non-irrigated landscapes. However, most of the plants on this list require some level of irrigation to survive during the dry summer months, particularly in drier regions.

Due to the great diversity in landscape environments throughout the Pacific Northwest, always check with your local Extension office or nursery when selecting fire-resistant plant material to avoid planting invasive plants in your area and to be sure you choose plants suitable for your environment. At the time of this printing, none of the plants listed in this guide were on the state noxious weed lists in Oregon, Washington, or Idaho.

Disclaimer

The purpose of this document is to provide homeowners with guidance on ways to landscape their property with fire-resistant plants to help reduce losses from wildfire damage. It contains suggestions and recommendations based on professional judgment, experience, and research and is intended to serve only as a guide. The authors, contributors, and publisher disclaim all warranties and guarantees with respect to the information in the document and assume no liability or responsibility with respect to the information.

Key for symbols

-  Prefers full sun (6 or more hours)
-  Prefers full sun to part shade
-  Prefers full shade (6 or more hours). Avoid afternoon sun.
-  Very low water-use plant; performs well in dry sites
-  Low water-use plant; performs well with minimal supplemental irrigation
-  Moderate water-use plant; performs well with supplemental irrigation
-  Attracts butterflies
-  Attracts birds
-  Deer-resistant
-  Performs well in rock gardens

For a current list of invasive plants in your area, visit the following websites:

USDA NRCS Invasive and Noxious Weeds: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious>

National Invasive Species Council: <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>

Oregon Invasive Species Council: <http://oregon.gov/OISC/>

Oregon Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Control: <http://oregon.gov/ODA/PLANT/WEEDS/>

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board: <http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/INDEX.htm>

Washington Invasive Species Council: <http://www.invasivespeciescoalition.org/StatewideCouncil/>

Idaho State Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed Program: <http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/NoxiousWeeds/indexnoxweedmain.php>

Idaho Invasive Species Council: <http://www.agri.state.id.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/InvasiveSpeciesCounsel/indexInvSpCounsel.php>

Ajuga reptans Carpet bugleweed

Groundcover grown mostly for its bronze, purple, variegated, and dark-green foliage. Flower spikes rise above the foliage in early summer.

Height 4–10" / Spread 12–18"

Flowers: white, purple, or blue spike
Bloom time: May–July
USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Antennaria rosea Pink pussytoes

An attractive groundcover with silvery-gray foliage and tiny flowers. Can be used between paving stones and in rock gardens.

Height 4–12" / Spread 8–12"

Flowers: pink, white, or rose
Bloom time: May–July
USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi Kinnikinnick

A mat-forming shrub with glossy-green leaves, pinkish-white flowers in spring, followed by red berries in the fall. Reddish fall color.

Height 4–8" / Spread 10–15"

Flowers: pinkish-white
Bloom time: June–September
USDA hardiness zone 2–6



Aubrieta deltoidea Rock cress

Mat-forming, spreading perennial with grayish-green foliage. Attractive masses of flowers in spring.

Height 3–8" / Spread 10–15"

Flowers: purple, pink
Bloom time: May–June
USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Ceanothus prostratus Mahala mat

A low-growing groundcover that is native to and should be used at higher elevations (above 4,000 feet). Not adaptable to lower elevations. Has an attractive leathery, evergreen leaf with blue flowers.

Height 1–3" / Spread 6–8'

Flowers: blue
Bloom time: June–August
USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Cerastium tomentosum

Snow-in-summer

A fast-growing groundcover that covers a large area quickly. Provides a nice contrast in the landscape with silvery-gray, woolly foliage. White flowers in summer.

Height 6–12" / Spread 2–3'

Flowers: white

Bloom time: June–July

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Dianthus species

Dianthus, Garden carnation, or Pinks

Green or grayish-green foliage covered with blooms. Clump-forming growth habit. Some varieties are fragrant.

Height 2–12" / Spread 6–16"

Flowers: pink, white, red, or yellow

Bloom time: May–August

USDA hardiness zones 3–9



Delosperma nubigenum

Yellow iceplant

Very low-growing groundcover with succulent, green foliage that changes to reddish bronze in winter. Not suitable for areas with extended periods (several weeks) of snow cover. More cold-hardy than purple iceplant.

Height 1–3" / Spread 24–30"

Flowers: yellow, daisylike

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 4–10



Delosperma cooperi

Purple iceplant

A groundcover with succulent, green foliage that changes to purplish red in winter. Does not tolerate foot traffic.

Height 1–4" / Spread 24–30"

Flowers: purple, daisylike

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 5–10



Fragaria species

Wild strawberry

A fast-growing groundcover with green foliage and white or pink flowers followed by red, edible fruit.

Height 8–10" / Spread 2–3'

Flowers: white or pink

Bloom time: May–July

USDA hardiness zone 5–9



Phlox subulata

Creeping phlox

A very popular spring bloomer, known for its showy flower display. Linear, green leaves form a low-growing mat.

Height 4–6" / Spread 18–24"

Flowers: white, blue, or pink; striped

Bloom time: April–June

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



Lamium species

Dead nettle

A groundcover with a trailing-type growth habit and attractive foliage. Often used in shady areas.

Height 8–12" / Spread 12–36"

Flowers: pink, white, or purple

Bloom time: May–June

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Pachysandra terminalis

Japanese pachysandra

A spreading semievergreen with shiny, dark-green leaves. Grows well in shady areas.

Height 6–8" / Spread 10"+

Flowers: white spikes

Bloom time: June

USDA hardiness zone 5–9



Sedum species

Sedum or stonecrops

A groundcover with succulent foliage in shades of green to blue. Many drought-resistant varieties. Great for rock gardens.

Height 2–12" / Spread 6–24"

Flowers: white, yellow, or pinkish-red

Bloom time: May–September

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Sempervivum species

Hens and chicks

A unique groundcover with green, succulent, rosette-shaped foliage.

The parent plant produces flowers and smaller plants or “chicks.” Excellent in rock walls.

Height 2–6" / Spread 6–10"

Flowers: pink, star-shaped, rise up on a stalk from the “hen”

Bloom time: June–August

USDA hardiness zone 4–10



Thymus praecox

Creeping thyme

A low-growing groundcover with fragrant leaves in shades of light to dark green, yellow, or variegated.

Attractive in mass plantings when blooming. Works well between pavers and in rock walls.

Height 1–4" / Spread 6–18"

Flowers: pink, white, or purple

Bloom time: May–August

USDA hardiness zone 4–10



Veronica species

Speedwell

A low-growing groundcover with glossy green or woolly leaves. Very showy in full bloom. Low-growing varieties work well in rock gardens.

Height 1–6" / Spread 12–18"

Flowers: blue, pink, or white

Bloom time: May–June

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!



Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.



Full sun



Very low water



Attracts butterflies



Full sun/part shade



Low water



Attracts birds



Good in rock gardens



Full shade



Moderate water



Deer-resistant

Achillea species

Yarrow

Fernlike foliage in shades of green to gray. Long-blooming and very drought tolerant. Make nice cut or dried flowers. Can be invasive.

Height 6–36" / Spread 12–24"

Flowers: white, red, yellow, or pink
 Bloom time: May–September
 USDA hardiness zone 4–8



‘Coronation Gold’: golden-yellow blooms

‘Moonshine’: pale yellow blooms

‘Paprika’: orange-red blooms

‘Summer Pastels’: several colors on one plant—pink, yellow, white



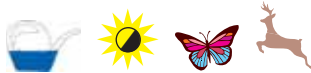
Allium schoenoprasum

Chives

A popular culinary herb with grass-like foliage and showy pink or purple flowers. Cut flowers back when done blooming.

Height 12–24" / Spread 20–24"

Flowers: pink or purplish; globe-shape
 Bloom time: June–August
 USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Armeria maritima

Sea thrift

Clump-forming perennial with grass-like foliage. Flowers rise above the mound with pink or white pom-pom flowers.

Height 6–10" / Spread 8–12"

Flowers: bright pink or white
 Bloom time: May–June
 USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Aquilegia species

Columbine

Native and ornamental varieties. A dainty perennial with a uniquely shaped flower in multicolored blooms. Foliage is grayish-green with shamrock shape. Remove spent flowers to encourage prolonged blooming. Plant in partial shade for improved drought tolerance. Short-lived but will reseed.

Height 10–36" / Spread 10–12"

Flowers: multiple colors with spurred, trumpet-shape blooms
 Bloom time: May–July
 USDA hardiness zone 3–9



Aurinia saxatilis

Basket-of-gold

Gray-green foliage. Provides spring color with blooms in shades of gold to light yellow. Pruning is suggested after flowering to maintain shape. Excellent in rock gardens or mass plantings.

Height 8–18" / Spread 1–2'

Flowers: gold to yellow, tiny flowers in clusters

Bloom time: April–May

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Campsis radicans

Trumpet vine

An attractive vine with green foliage and large, orange, trumpet-shape flowers that attract butterflies. Useful for covering arbors and fences.

Spread 20'+

Flowers: orange to red, trumpet-shape

Bloom time: July–September

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Bergenia cordifolia

Heartleaf bergenia

Large, glossy-green leaves in summer, changing to burgundy in fall. Flowers rise up on a spike.

Height 12–14" / Spread 12–18"

Flowers: pink, white, bell-shape

Bloom time: May–June

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Carex species

Sedges

These tidy, clump-forming, grasslike plants are semievergreen and work well in rock gardens or as edging. Foliage is flat in shades of green or variegated. Also does well in shade.

Height 12–18" / Spread 10–12"

Flowers: inconspicuous

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Coreopsis species

Coreopsis or Tickseed

Either a short-lived or long-lived perennial depending upon variety. Produces single and double daisylike flowers in various colors. Green foliage and wiry stems.

Height 10–24" / Spread 12–18"

Flowers: golden yellow, light yellow, pink, or red

Bloom time: June–October

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



‘Moonbeam’: light yellow flowers, mound-forming perennial

‘Sunburst’: double, golden yellow flowers

‘Zagreb’: golden yellow flowers



Echinacea purpurea

Coneflower

A perennial herb with large daisy-like flowers in various colors. Late blooming. Makes a good cut or dried flower.

Height 2–3' / Spread 1.5–2'

Flowers: purple, pink, or white

Bloom time: July–September

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Delphinium varieties

Delphinium

Extremely popular for tall, upright growth habit and beautiful spike flowers in various shades. Works well in a border.

Height 1–7' / Spread 1–3'

Flowers: blues, purples, whites, or pinks

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Epilobium angustifolium

Fireweed

A perennial wildflower with an aggressive, upright growth habit, medium-green leaves, and showy flowers in shades of pink or white.

Height 2–3' / Spread 2–3'

Flowers: white or pink spike

Bloom time: June–July

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Photo: William R. Hewlett © California Academy of Sciences

Geranium cinereum

Grayleaf cranesbill

Dwarf, semi-evergreen with gray-green foliage, a mounding growth habit, and attractive blooms in summer. Works well as a groundcover or in rock gardens.

Height 4–6" / Spread 10–12"

Flowers: pinks, white, magenta; saucer shape

Bloom time: June–July

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Gaillardia varieties

Blanket flower

Grayish-green foliage and daisylike flowers in various colors. Very drought tolerant. May be short-lived. Long-blooming perennial; keep deadheaded for continuous bloom. Fuzzy, round seed heads follow flowering.

Height 8–36" / Spread 12–24"

Flowers: red petals tipped in gold, all gold, or burgundy, with reddish-brown centers

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 3–10



Helianthemum nummularium

Sun rose

A moundlike growth habit with gray-green foliage and delicate flowers. Prefers dry, more alkaline soils. Works well in rock gardens.

Height 8–12" / Spread 12–16"

Flowers: red, pink, yellow, orange, or multicolored

Bloom time: June–August

USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Heuchera sanguinea

Coralbells

Attractive dark green, maroon, reddish, or gold foliage with scalloped edges. Flower stalks rise above the foliage and produce delicate blooms. Performs best in light shade. Several varieties available.

Height 12–20" / Spread 12–15"

Flowers: red, white, or pink

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Hemerocallis species

Daylily

A very popular perennial that works well in borders or mass plantings. Long, wide, grasslike foliage with mounding growth habit. Large flowers bloom for 1 day, die, and are replaced by new blooms the following day. Many flower colors available. Better flower presentation with additional moisture. Blossoms are edible.

Height 1–4' / Spread 1–3'

Flowers: white, yellow, pink, red, gold, or mixed colors; lily-shape bloom

Bloom time: July–August

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



'Stella de Oro': gold flowers, one of the longest blooming daylilies



Hosta species

Hosta lily

A shade perennial with attractive foliage in various shades of green to bluish-green. Flower stalk rises above the leaves with a fragrant, bell-shape flower.

Height 6–36" / Spread 20–24"

Flowers: purple, lavender, or white; hang from a spike

Bloom time: July–August

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Iris hybrids

Iris, tall bearded

Previously known as *Iris germanica*. Bluish-green, swordlike leaves. Large, sophisticated flowers in every shade and often bicolor and fragrant. Lift and divide clumps every 3–4 years to keep maintained. Makes a nice cut flower.

Height 16–30" / Spread 14–24"

Flowers: multicolored

Bloom time: May–June

USDA hardiness zone 3–10



Kniphofia uvaria

Torch lily or Red-hot poker

Stiff, bluish-green, tufted, grasslike foliage. Unique flower clusters rise on spikes above the foliage.

Height 1–4' / Spread 2–3'

Flowers: orange, yellow, white, or green, often multicolored

Bloom time: June–August

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Lavandula species

Lavender

Known for its attractive purple bloom, popular fragrance, and dried flowers. Although it contains scented oils, this plant is slow to ignite if kept moist.

Height 1–3' / Spread 1–4'

Flowers: purple, white, lavender; spikelike

Bloom time: July–October

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Linum perenne

Flax, blue

A self-sowing wildflower with delicate leaves and stems. Excellent in mass plantings or meadows. Remove spent blossoms to promote longer blooming, prevent reseeding, and keep tidy.

Height 12–20" / Spread 12–14"

Flowers: light blue or white

Bloom time: May–June

USDA hardiness zone 2–8



Lonicera species

Honeysuckle

Attractive, fast-growing vines with fragrant, trumpet-shaped flowers. Can be used for covering a fence or trellis.

Spread 10'+

Flowers: white, red, orange, or yellow

Bloom time: July–September

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Lupinus varieties

Lupine

A tall, border perennial with dark green foliage and very showy flowers. May need staking.

Height 18–48" / Spread 24–26"

Flowers: multiple colors including blue, yellow, pink

Bloom time: May–July

USDA hardiness zone 4–6



Penstemon species

Penstemon or Beardtongue

Excellent perennial for a dry garden. Several varieties and flower colors. Great specimen plant.

Height 4–48" / Spread 6–36"

Flowers: pink, purple, blue, red, or white

Bloom time: June–August

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



RG

Oenothera species

Evening primrose

A long-blooming perennial with a low-growing, trailing, or more upright growth habit. Cup-shaped flowers in shades of yellow, white, or pink.

Height 6–12" / Spread 12–24"

Flowers: lemon–yellow, white, or pink

Bloom time: June–October

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



'Rocky Mountain'

Papaver orientale

Oriental poppy

A very ornamental perennial with large, papery, cup-shape flowers. Interesting capsule-type seedpods follow flowering.

Height 2–3' / Spread 1–2'

Flowers: orange, white, red, pink, or purple, with dark centers

Bloom time: June–July

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



'Red Rocks'

PERENNIALS

Ratibida columnifera

Prairie coneflower or Mexican hat

Tall, upright flowers with lacy, green foliage. Petals grow downward away from the tall center flower disk. Biennial.

Height 18–24" / Spread 12–24"

Flowers: yellow or red, with distinct tall center

Bloom time: July–October

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Stachys byzantina

Lamb's ear

A border perennial known for its attractive, velvety, white-silver leaves. Foliage provides nice contrast in the landscape.

Height 12–15" / Spread 15–18"

Flowers: purplish-pink spikes

Bloom time: July–frost

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Salvia species

Salvia or Sage

Perennial herb with shrublike growth habit and grayish-green or multicolored foliage. Formal, spikelike flowers in various colors. Remove spent blossoms to encourage a second bloom.

Height: 18–28" / Spread 24–34"

Flowers: purple, blue, rose

Bloom time: June–September

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Yucca species

Yucca

Recognized by swordlike leaves in various shade of green, gray-green, or variegated green and yellow. Produces stalks of white flowers during the growing season.

Height 2–4' / Spread 2–4'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 4–10



Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!



Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.



Full sun



Very low water



Attracts butterflies



Full sun/part shade



Low water



Attracts birds

RG Good in rock gardens



Full shade



Moderate water



Deer-resistant

Ceanothus gloriosus

Point Reyes ceanothus

Small, wide-spreading shrub with dark-green, leathery foliage and blue-purple flowers in spring. Useful on steep coastal banks. Needs protection from wind. Short-lived plant (5–10 years). Varieties available.

Height 1–3' / Spread 5–6'

Flowers: blue-purple

USDA hardiness zone 7–9



Cotoneaster apiculatus

Cranberry cotoneaster

A broadleaf semi-evergreen. Dark, shiny, green leaves, changing to burgundy in the fall. Interesting mounding growth habit. Produces tiny, pink flowers followed by a red cranberry-like fruit that persists into winter. Eastern exposure is best.

Height 3' / Spread 3–6'

USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Cistus purpureus

Orchid rockrose

An evergreen with a compact growth habit, green-gray leaves, and showy, reddish-purple flowers. Tolerates wind and salt spray.

Height 3–4' / Spread 3–4'

Flowers: reddish-purple

USDA hardiness zone 8–10



Daphne x burkwoodii

var. 'Carol Mackie'

Carol Mackie daphne

An attractive, semievergreen shrub with variegated leaves and fragrant, pinkish flowers in spring.

Height 2–4' / Spread 2–4'

Flowers: pink

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Mahonia aquifolium

Oregon grapeholly

An upright evergreen with shiny, dark-green leaves in summer, changing to purplish-red in fall. Yellow flowers in the spring followed by bluish-black berries.

Height 5–6' / Spread 5–6'

Flowers: yellow

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



Gaultheria shallon

Salal

A low-growing, broadleaf evergreen with attractive white to pink flowers, followed by edible black fruit. Shrub grows larger in shady conditions and stays small in full-sun conditions.

Height 1–10' / Spread 3–12'

Flowers: white, pink

USDA hardiness zone 6–8



Mahonia repens

Creeping holly

Similar to Oregon grapeholly, but smaller in size. Spreading green leaves turn purplish-red in fall. Yellow flowers followed by bluish-black berries.

Height 12–18" / Spread 2'

Flowers: yellow

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Paxistima myrtifolia

Oregon boxwood

A low-growing shrub with leathery, light-green leaves. Stays more compact in full-sun areas.

Height 1–4' / Spread 1–4'

USDA hardiness zone 5–8



Rhododendron macrophyllum

Pacific rhododendron

A Pacific Northwest native rhododendron with pale pink to purplish flowers in spring and dark-green leaves. Prefers acidic soils. Not adaptable in colder, drier regions such as eastern Washington and central and eastern Oregon.

Height 6–12' / Spread 10–12'

Flowers: pink to purple

USDA hardiness zone 6–9



Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!



Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.



Full sun



Very low water



Attracts butterflies



Full sun/part shade



Low water



Attracts birds

RG Good in rock gardens



Full shade



Moderate water



Deer-resistant

Acer circinatum

Vine maple

A Pacific Northwest native with an upright growth habit and attractive red, orange, to yellow fall color.

Height 15–20' / Spread 15–20'

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Fall color

Amelanchier species

Serviceberry

A multistemmed shrub or tree that bears white flowers in spring followed by edible, purplish-black fruit. Excellent fall colors of red-orange. Prefers additional moisture.

Height 8–12' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 4–5



Acer glabrum

Rocky Mountain maple

Small tree or large shrub with attractive dark green foliage and red twigs. The “helicopter” seeds turn reddish in summer. Attractive red fall color.

Height 10–15' / Spread 10–15'

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Caryopteris x clandonensis

Blue-mist spirea

Dense, rounded shrub with grayish-green leaves. Produces lavender-blue flowers in late summer. Foliage has a sagelike scent. Nice color for late season. Attracts bees. Can die back in winter and be cut back like a perennial in early spring. Prefers additional moisture. May reseed.

Height 3–5' / Spread 3–5'

Flowers: lavender-blue

USDA hardiness zone 5–10



‘Dark Knight’: deep blue flowers with silvery-gray foliage



Cornus sericea

Redosier dogwood

A fast-growing shrub often found in riparian areas. White flowers followed by white fruits. Attractive red stems offer winter color to the landscape. Many cultivars available with different-colored stems and leaves and in various sizes.

Height 7–10' / Spread 8–10'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 2–8



Euonymus alatus

‘Compactus’

Dwarf burning bush

Rounded shrub with green leaves and “winged” bark. Excellent scarlet fall color. Creates a nice shrub border. Does best with eastern exposure.

Height 4–6' / Spread 4–6'

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Fall color

Holodiscus discolor

Oceanspray

An attractive, large shrub with a graceful growth habit and pendulous, creamy white flowers in summer.

Height 6–9' / Spread 3–6'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 5–9



Perovskia atriplicifolia

Russian sage

Fine, feathery-textured shrub with silvery-gray leaves and a sage-like aroma. May die back in colder areas and can be cut back in fall or spring. Produces beautiful lavender-blue flowers in late summer. Do not over-water. May reseed.

Height 3–5' / Spread 3–4'

Flowers: lavender-blue

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Philadelphus species

Mockorange

Known for its sweet-smelling, white flowers and bright-green foliage. Flowers can be single or double. Vase-shape growth habit.

Height 6–8' / Spread 6–8'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Rhamnus frangula 'Columnaris'

Tall hedge

Dense, upright shrub ideal for a hedge or shrub border. Glossy-green leaves.

Height 8–12' / Spread 3–4'

USDA hardiness zone 2–7



Rhamnus frangula 'Asplenifolia'

Fernleaf buckthorn

A feathery-textured shrub with interesting narrow, dark-green leaves. Can be used as a focal point or specimen plant in the landscape.

Height 10–12' / Spread 6–10'

USDA hardiness zone 2–7



Prunus besseyi

Western sandcherry

A medium-size shrub with an open, irregular growth habit. Produces fragrant, white flowers in spring, followed by edible, red (changing to black) fruit. Leaves are grayish-green, changing to a coppery-red in fall. Prefers additional moisture, but can sucker if overwatered.

Height 4–6' / Spread 4–6'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Rhododendron occidentale

Western azalea

A deciduous, upright shrub with attractive white to salmon-pink flowers in spring.

Height 5' / Spread 5–10'

Flowers: white to pink

USDA hardiness zone 6–9



Ribes species

Flowering currant

Small to medium-size shrubs with attractive bright to dark-green leaves and pink flowers. Some species produce edible fruit.

Height 3–6' / Spread 3–6'

Flowers: pink

USDA hardiness zone 2–7



Rhus species

Sumac

Some species are smaller mounding shrubs with dark-green leaves. Larger species have an upright, tree form and form suckers, creating groves. Fall color can be spectacular, especially in the larger species displaying shades of orange, red, yellow, or purple. Tiny yellow flowers change to fuzzy red fruit. Prefers additional moisture.

Height 2–20' / Spread 4–15'

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



Rosa species

Hardy shrub rose

Low-maintenance shrubs with attractive, sometimes scented flowers in a wide variety of colors. Blooms continuously or once during the season, depending on variety. Excellent fall color and ornamental rose hips for winter interest.

Height 2–6' / Spread 2–6'

Flowers: various

USDA hardiness zone 2–9



Rosa woodsii

Wood's rose

A native wild rose in the Pacific Northwest with a spreading growth habit. Produces single pink flowers in summer followed by ornamental, red hips.

Height 3–6' / Spread 3–6'

Flowers: pink

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Salix species

Willow

Fast-growing shrubs with narrow leaves, dense branches, and yellow fall color. Several species are available. Prefers additional moisture. Some varieties more susceptible to insect and disease. **Note: Large, tree-form willows generally are not recommended for a home landscape, due to invasive roots and weak wood.**

Height 6–30' / Spread 5–20'

USDA hardiness zone 2–9



Salix integra 'Hakuro-nishiki':

Dapple willow, to 10' tall with variegated foliage in shades of pink, green, and white

Salix purpurea: Alaska blue willow, 8–10' tall with attractive blue foliage; dwarf variety known as Artic blue willow, to 5' tall



Spiraea x bumalda

Bumald spirea

Popular, clump-forming shrub that produces bowl-shaped flowers in shades of white or pink in late summer. Leaves generally are green but can be tinted in shades of red or yellow. Many other spirea varieties available.

Height 2–4' / Spread 2–4'

Flowers: white, pink

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



'Froebelii': deep pink flowers, green foliage

'Goldflame': bright pink flowers and bronze-red young leaves

'Limemound': pink flowers with bright lime-green foliage



Spiraea douglasii

Western spirea

A medium-size shrub that produces fuzzy pink to purplish flowers in mid- to late summer. Often found along waterways. Useful in plantings near streams.

Height 3–6' / Spread 3–6'

Flowers: pink, purple

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Symphoricarpos albus

Snowberry

Upright, arching shrub with bluish-green leaves. Pink flowers in summer, followed by white, rounded fruit, which persists through the winter. Attracts birds.

Height 4–6' / Spread 4–6'

Flowers: pink

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Syringa species

Lilac

Large shrubs known for their beautiful, fragrant blossoms in spring. Available in many varieties with flowers in shades of white, lavender, purple, and pink. Can be used for a hedge. Prefers additional water to get established.

Height 5–15' / Spread 6–12'

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



'Charles Joly': double, magenta blooms

'Ellen Willmott': double, white blooms

'President Lincoln': single, blue blooms

'Sensation': single, purple flowers with white edges



Viburnum trilobum

'Compactum'

Viburnum, Compact American cranberry

An excellent compact, rounded shrub. Green, maple-like foliage in summer changing to orange-red in fall. Produces white flowers followed by minimal red fruit in fall. Eastside exposure is best.

Height 4–6' / Spread 4–6'

USDA hardiness zone 2–7



Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!



Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.

Ponderosa pine and western larch are among the most fire-resistant conifers due to their thick bark, which protects them from fire, and the high moisture content of their foliage.

Maintenance tip: Conifers and other large trees that are next to the house should be pruned to a height of 15–20 feet above the ground, or to just above the lower roof line, to help prevent fire from reaching the house or tree crowns.



Larix occidentalis

Western larch

An attractive, deciduous conifer with a pyramidal growth habit and soft, green needles that turn yellow in fall.

Height 100–180' / Spread 30–40'
USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Pinus ponderosa

Ponderosa pine

Beautiful pine tree with long, green needles in groups of two or three. Growth habit becomes more open with age. Interesting bark texture and cinnamon-brown bark color.

Height 50–60' / Spread 20–25'
USDA hardiness zone 3–6



Full sun



Full sun/part shade



Full shade



Very low water



Low water



Moderate water



Attracts butterflies



Attracts birds



Deer-resistant



Good in rock gardens

Acer ginnala

Amur maple

Small tree or large shrub with irregular growth habit and excellent red fall color. Good choice for a small area, can be used to create a hedge. A subspecies of Tatarian maple.

Height 15–20' / Spread 15–20'

USDA hardiness zone 2–8



Acer rubrum

Red maple

A fast-growing shade tree with bright-green leaves and excellent scarlet fall color. Prefers moist soils. Several varieties available.

Height 40–60' / Spread 10–40'

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Acer macrophyllum

Bigleaf maple

A large shade tree with large, glossy, green leaves changing to yellow in the fall. Often found near stream banks.

Height 30–75' / Spread 30–50'

USDA hardiness zone 5–7



Aesculus hippocastanum

Horsechestnut

A large shade tree with rounded growth habit, attractive white flowers, and large, spiny fruits.

Height 40–50' / Spread 30–40'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



Alnus rubra

Red alder

A deciduous tree with an open, conical growth habit and spreading branches. Often found in wet areas. Dark-green foliage and smooth, light-gray bark.

Height 45–50' / Spread 20–30'

USDA hardiness zone 5–8



Alnus tenuifolia

Mountain alder

Grown as a small tree or multistemmed shrub. Dull green foliage and very cold-hardy. Often found near water.

Height 20–25' / Spread 15–20'

USDA hardiness zone 5–8



Photo: Gerald and Buff Corsi © California Academy of Sciences

Betula species

Birch

An ornamental tree with bright-green foliage, changing to yellow in fall. Several varieties have interesting bark texture and are known for their distinct white bark.

Height 30–40' / Spread 20–30'

USDA hardiness zone 2–9



European white birch (*B. pendula*): showy white bark and upright habit
 Jacquemontii birch (*B. jacquemontii*): excellent white bark and narrow, pyramidal growth habit
 Cutleaf weeping birch (*B. pendula* 'Gracilis'): drooping branches and cut leaves
 Paper birch (*B. papyrifera*): upright, pyramidal growth habit and white bark
 River birch (*B. nigra*): curling, cinnamon-brown, peeling bark



Catalpa speciosa

Western catalpa

A large shade tree with green, heart-shaped leaves and attractive, creamy-white, orchidlike flowers followed by long, thin, seed pods.

Height 40–50' / Spread 20–25'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Celtis occidentalis

Common hackberry

A large shade tree with light-green leaves and interesting corky bark. Very drought tolerant.

Height 40–50' / Spread 35–40'

USDA hardiness zone 2–9



Cercis canadensis

Eastern redbud

An attractive, small ornamental tree with showy, pink, pealike blooms in early spring. Also has green, heart-shaped leaves in summer, changing to yellow in fall. Needs protection in harsh, cold environments. California or western redbud (*C. occidentalis*) also is fire-resistant but less hardy.

Height 25–35' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: pink

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Cornus florida

Flowering dogwood

A small, ornamental shrub with showy pink, reddish, or white “flower” bracts and an open, low-branching, irregular growth habit. Several varieties available.

Height 20–30' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: pink, red, white

USDA hardiness zone 5–9



Crataegus species

Hawthorn

Small ornamental tree with single or multiple stems, white or red flowers, and showy fruit that attracts birds. Some varieties are thornless.

Height 15–20' / Spread 10–15'

Flowers: white, red

USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Fraxinus pennsylvanica

Green ash

Large, upright shade tree with rounded growth habit and nice yellow fall color. Good alternative to maples and oaks. All varieties are male and fruitless.

Height 40–60' / Spread 20–40'

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



'Marshall's Seedless': rounded habit with dark-green leaves

'Patmore': rounded habit, very cold-hardy

'Summit': more upright and narrow than other varieties



Fall color

Fagus sylvatica

European beech

A large, slow-growing shade tree with a densely pyramidal to rounded growth habit. Lustrous, dark-green leaves in summer, changing to bronze in fall. Varieties available with colorful foliage.

Height 50–60' / Spread 35–45'

USDA hardiness zone 4–7



Fraxinus americana

White ash

Similar to green ash. Dense, rounded shade tree with beautiful fall color in shades of red, yellow, and maroon. Requires more water than green ash.

Height 40–60' / Spread 20–40'

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



‘Autumn Purple’: a seedless variety with dark-green leaves that turn maroon in fall



Fall color



Gymnocladus dioica

Kentucky coffee tree

A large shade tree for large areas. Leaves are dark green in summer. Female trees produce large seed pods.

Height 40–50' / Spread 30–40'

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Gleditsia triacanthos

var. inermis. cvs

Thornless honeylocust

These trees provide a filtered shade environment with their fine leaves. There are many thornless and seedless cultivars available in various sizes and growth habits.

Height 35–40' / Spread 30–50'

USDA hardiness zone 3–9



‘Shademaster’: a dense, large variety with yellow fall color

‘Skyline’: growth habit is more pyramidal and upright

‘Sunburst’: golden/yellow leaves on the new growth, eventually changing to green.



Juglans species

Walnut

A large tree with spreading growth habit. The leaves are divided, giving a featherlike appearance. Some species provide edible nuts.

Height 40–60'+ / Spread 30–50'

USDA hardiness zone 4–9



Liquidambar styraciflua

American sweetgum

A large shade tree with a unique green leaf followed by yellow, red, or purple fall color. Seedpods are spiked and may be a nuisance in the landscape. 'Rotundiloba' is a fruitless variety.

Height 60–75' / Spread 20–25'

USDA hardiness zone 5–9



Malus species

Crabapple

Many varieties to choose from. These trees have beautiful spring flowers in many colors, including rose, pink, red, and white. Green or purplish foliage. They also provide ornamental fruit and fall color. Some are fruitless.

Height 15–20' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: rose, pink, red, white

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



'Bechtel': double pink blooms, seldom bears fruit

'Brandywine': double rosy-pink blooms

'Royalty': red flowers, purplish foliage

'Spring Snow': white flowers, seldom bears fruit, teardrop-shape growth habit

Populus tremuloides

Quaking aspen

Light bark and trembling green leaves make this a popular tree. This tree will sucker and produce groves, so it should be used in a larger landscape setting. Prefers moister soils. Excellent yellow fall color. Susceptible to several diseases and insects.

Height 30–40' / Spread 12–15'

USDA hardiness zone 1–8



P. tremula 'Erecta': Swedish aspen has an upright, columnar growth habit and is said not to sucker as much as quaking aspen.



Fall color

Platanus racemosa

Western or California sycamore

A large, fast-growing tree with dark-green leaves and flaking bark in shades of white, brown, and gray.

Height 40–80' / Spread 50–70'

USDA hardiness zone 7–9



Swedish aspen, fall color



Prunus virginiana

Chokecherry

A medium-size tree to large shrub with green leaves and white flowers followed by edible purple fruits. Will produce suckers.

Height 20–30' / Spread 18–25'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 2–6



Quercus garryana

Oregon white oak

Known for its large, twisting limbs, this large shade tree has dark, glossy, green leaves, changing to reddish brown in fall.

Height 40–90' / Spread 30–60'

USDA hardiness zone 6–9



Prunus virginiana 'Schubert'

Canada red chokecherry

Green leaves emerge in spring and change to dark red in summer. Fragrant, white flowers in spring followed by purplish-red fruit, which can be used for jams, jellies, and wines. Also sold as a large shrub.

Height 20–30' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Quercus palustris

Pin oak

A fast-growing oak with dark-green, bristly leaves and lower, pendulous branches. Young trees have a pyramidal growth habit, but form becomes more open and rounded as trees mature. Prefers acidic soils.

Height 50–70' / Spread 25–40'

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Robinia pseudoacacia

'Purple Robe'

Purple Robe locust

An upright tree with attractive, fragrant, purple flowers. Yellow fall color. Very adaptable tree in tough environments.

Height 30–40' / Spread 20–30'

USDA hardiness zone 3–8



Quercus rubra

Red oak

One of the faster growing oaks, good for a large area. Dark-green summer leaves have pointed lobes. Nice fall colors of red, orange, and brown.

Height 60–75' / Spread 40–50'

USDA hardiness zone 4–8



Sorbus aucuparia

Mountain ash

An attractive, ornamental tree with an upright, oval growth habit. Displays showy white flowers in spring, followed by orange-red fruit that persists. Fine-textured, dark-green leaves provide some fall colors of red, yellow, or purple.

Height 20–30' / Spread 15–20'

Flowers: white

USDA hardiness zone 3–7



APPENDIX

Plant availability

If you are unable to find the plants you want locally, visit the Oregon Association of Nurseries website for plant availability at: <http://www.nurseryguide.com> or the Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association at <http://www.wslna.org/public/home.shtml> under the buyers guide.

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Groundcovers

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