



Washington Association Of Conservation Districts

PLANT MATERIAL CENTER

16564 Bradley Road, Bow WA 98232

Phone (360) 757-1094 • Fax (360) 757-3923 • e-mail: pmcsales@clearwire.net

BIG LEAF MAPLE

Acer macrophyllum

Distribution:

Big Leaf Maple is generally found growing west of the Cascades in Washington at elevations from sea level to 1,500 feet.

Growth Habit:

Big Leaf Maple is a large deciduous tree, growing to over 80 feet tall, with a crown that can spread over 60 feet in diameter

Adaptability:

Big Leaf Maple can be found growing in a wide range of sites that range from wet to dry and sunny to shady. It grows better in full sun however. It grows well on wet, bottom-lands, or on steep, rocky slopes

Comments:

Big Leaf Maple has many uses as a conservation species. It is favored as a riparian restoration tree due to its adaptability, vigor and growth rate, and size and stature. It quickly grows above weed competition and provides shade for streams. Once established on a site, it provides diverse wildlife habitat, including forage for deer and elk, nesting for birds, and its seeds are used as food by many species of birds and animals. A mature specimen provides considerable leaf litter for the soil, and is therefore considered a '*soil-building*' species. It also has commercial value. Its wood is used in furniture and cabinet building, veneer, musical instruments and as fuel.





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BITTER CHERRY

Prunus emarginata

Distribution: Bitter Cherry grows throughout Washington at low to mid-elevations. In western Washington, Bitter Cherry is often a component in coastal forests and in eastern Washington it is often found in Ponderosa Pine forests.

Growth Habit: Bitter Cherry typically grows as a deciduous upright tree, occasionally reaching 30 feet tall, but can occur in a shorter bushier form.

Adaptability: Bitter Cherry is adaptable to a wide range of conditions throughout its range. It can be found growing in soils that range from wet to dry and sites that vary from shady to exposed. It is commonly found growing equally well as an understory species in mixed species woodland, or as a pioneering species in open disturbed areas

Comments: Bitter Cherry has numerous uses as a conservation species in the state, but producing edible fruit is not one of them. Its temptingly bright red cherries that are produced in mid-summer are in fact incredibly bitter. It is not considered unpalatable for the many species of birds, bears, and rodents however, which consider it an important food source. Its stems and leaves are also good browse for deer and elk. It is also an attractive native flowering tree. A mature tree growing in a favorable site can produce a mass display of clusters of white fragrant flowers in the spring. Intermediate aged trees produce a glossy red bark that stands out in winter when all else is defoliated.





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CASCARA

Rhamnus purshiana

Distribution: Cascara is found throughout Washington at low to mid-elevations, but is more common on the west side of the Cascades.

Growth Habit: Cascara typically grows as an upright tree, occasionally reaching 30 feet tall. It is deciduous even though older leaves may persist through winter.

Adaptability: Cascara is adapted to grow in a wide range of conditions throughout its range. It can be found growing in soils that range from wet to dry and sites that vary from shady to exposed. Most typically however, Cascara is found growing in moist soils, with some shade present.

Comments: Historical demand for Cascara bark for use in the pharmaceutical industry (as a laxative) has resulted in a considerable reduction in the native Cascara population. It was once commonly found growing as a riparian species, and is considered an outstanding species for riparian restoration. It also provides wildlife habitat. Its berries are a favorite food of several species of birds and its stems provide browse for deer and elk.





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PACIFIC CRABAPPLE

Malus fusca

(syn. Pyrus fusca)

Distribution:

Native Crabapple is commonly found at lower elevations through out Western Washington, particularly near the coast and in the Puget Sound basin.

Growth Habit:

Native Crabapple is a small tree, or an upright deciduous shrub. It can grow to 30 feet high and spread to 12 feet wide. It grows best in areas with partial to full sun.



Adaptability:

Native crabapple is typically found in moist woods, swamps, and low, damp sites such as stream sides and moist fields.

Comments:

Native Crabapple is an excellent soil and streambank stabilizer, and an important wildlife species. It produces small oblong crabapples in late summer. The fruit remains well into winter, providing food for a wide variety of birds, including purple finches.





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PAPER BIRCH *Betula papyrifera*

Distribution:

Paper Birch is found predominantly in the northern half of Washington State, from the San Juan Islands east through the inter-mountain region. Paper Birch is located at low to mid elevations.

Growth Habit:

Paper Birch is a large, fast growing upright deciduous tree. Mature trees can grow to over 70 feet tall, with a few specimens over 100 feet. Trunk diameters can range from 8 inches in a 30 year old tree to over 30 inches in some older, mature specimens.

Adaptability:

Paper Birch is a true pioneer species in every sense of the word, in a wide range of sites. And like many other pioneer species, this one is not very shade-tolerant. In a well exposed site however, they can be established on all but the driest of sites. And even though Paper Birch has shown the ability to grow directly on mine spoils, it does best on sites that do not dry out too soon or too much during the summer. Supplemental irrigation does benefit seedlings if they dry out.

Comments:

It could be argued that Paper Birch is one of the most under used conservation species, especially when its conservation values are listed. They include being broadly adaptable to a wide range of sites, in particular exposed distributed areas. They establish and grow vigorously. Established stands provide shade and erosion control for streams, seed and shelter for birds, and browse for some foragers. The wood is valued for fuel, pulp, veneer and in some cases, dimensional lumber. It is also a valuable ornamental species with bright, white bark developing with age. The fall color is always attractive.





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VINE MAPLE

Acer circinatum

Distribution:

Vine Maple occurs primarily west of the Cascades in Washington at elevations from sea level to 4,500 feet. It can also be found growing in pockets along the east slope of the Cascades.



Growth Habit:

Vine Maple grows as a large shrub or small deciduous tree. Its habit is highly variable, often depending upon exposure. It tends to grow long and rangy when in the shade, and more upright and compact in the sun. It can grow from 10 to 30 feet high with an equally variable spread.

Adaptability:

Vine Maple grows in a variety sites that range from sunny to shady, and wet to dry, from a moist bottom-land, to a dry rocky slope. It grows best in areas with moist soils and some shade, particularly along the east slope of the Cascades.



Comments:

Vine Maple is an important conservation species for a variety of reasons. It is adapted to a wide range of sites. It can be used as a pioneering species on open, disturbed sites, or as an understory species growing along pre-existing woodland. It is a common component of riparian zones throughout the region.



Once established, its roots are effective soil stabilizers. It has numerous uses in wildlife habitat restoration. Its seeds are an important food source for many species of birds, squirrels, and rodents. Deer and elk browse on its leaves and stems too. Vine Maple is also used as an ornamental species. The autumn leaf color can be quite vivid, particularly when grown in the sun.