



Pacific Northwest Native Plants

Find the plants below and on the back of this sheet.



Sword Fern

(Polystichum munitum)

Sword fern is known in many Vancouver Island and Puget Sound languages as the “pala-pala plant” because children would see who could pull off the most leaflets in one breath, saying “pala” with each leaflet.



Red Huckleberry

(Vaccinium parvifolium)

Huckleberries were used by native coastal peoples as fish bait and could be enjoyed right off the bush, mashed and dried into cakes for the winter, dried and eaten like raisins, or preserved in oil.



Salal

(Gaultheria shallon)

Native coastal peoples ate fresh berries, dried them into cakes, and used them to sweeten other foods.



Salmonberry

(Rubus spectabilis)

They are one of the earliest to ripen in the spring (May-June), and were enjoyed by native coastal peoples, but weren't dried because they're too watery.



Horsetail

(Equisetum arvense)

It is also called a “puzzle plant” because the sectioned stems can be separated near the brownish-black rings and then put back together. Ancient Romans ate the young, fertile shoots like we eat asparagus.



Dull Oregon Grape

(Mahonia nervosa)

The tart berries were often mixed with sweeter berries, like those from salal. Native coastal peoples used its bright yellow inner bark as a dye for baskets

Pacific Northwest Native Trees

Find the plants below.

Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)

Red alder is considered the very best for smoking salmon. Native coastal peoples used alder bark to dye fishing nets red, making them invisible to fish. In early spring the Straits Salish people ate the inner bark, which has strong antibiotic properties.



Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

Douglas fir is recognized by its thick, corky bark, which helps it survive forest fires. The pitch was used to caulk canoes and seal harpoon heads, as well as in medicinal salves for skin irritations and wounds. Douglas firs can live more than 1,000 years!



Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*)

Western hemlock's durable bark was used by the Quileute to tan hides; by some Coastal Salish people to dye materials red; by the Nuxalk and other groups to dye fishnets red (making them invisible to fish) and by the Haida to create large feast bowls.



Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)

Western redcedar played a vital role in native coastal peoples' lives; it is called the "tree of life" because it provided for them from birth to death. Its rot-resistant and easily carved wood was shaped into many things such as dugout canoes, totem poles, and clothing.



Bigleaf Maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

Many First Nations languages call the Bigleaf maple the "paddle tree" because the wood was carved into paddles. Bigleaf maple hosts more moss than other trees in this region; the moss can grow so thick that soil develops, allowing new tree roots to sprout and grow.

