

# Green from the ground up

*Natural gardening ideas for homeowners*



*Dry streambed with native plants*



*Natural gardener*



*Oregon sunshine*

Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods initiative is a long-term effort to conserve and restore nature throughout the urban area and ensure that every citizen in the region has access to nature.



## Gardening naturally makes your home more nature friendly

Good for people, pets and the planet, natural gardening involves simple practices like using native plants and compost to create a beautiful garden with fewer chemicals, fertilizers and water. Natural gardening helps:

- save water, energy, time and money
- keep local streams and rivers healthy
- attract birds and butterflies to your yard
- protect fish and wildlife habitat.

Whether you've been gardening with native plants for decades or have just started using fewer chemicals in your yard, you are part of a growing group of people making a difference to the region's health and livability.

Placing the "right plant in the right place" is the most important step in gardening naturally. Look inside for a list of native plants that will save you time and money. Our list describes the conditions the plant needs to succeed (amount of sunlight and moisture), and its use (shade, privacy, etc.) in your garden.



BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	MATURE SIZE (TYPICAL)	 LIGHT NEEDS	 WATER NEEDS	COMMENTS
<b>T R E E S</b>					
<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>	Oregon ash	Height: 40 ft–80 ft Spread: 25 ft	Su	M, SW	Has winged fruit, not berries like other ashes. Often grows near streams or areas that flood.
<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	Sitka spruce	Height: 150 ft–200 ft	Su, PSu	SW, M	Fast-growing, long-lived conifer found in low-lying, moist forests.
<i>Pinus contorta</i>	shore pine	Height: 10 ft–25 ft	Su, PSu	D	Drought tolerant, shade intolerant.
<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	ponderosa pine	Height: 55 ft–90 ft	Su, PSu	D	Drought tolerant. Good for windbreaks.
<i>Quercus garryana</i>	Oregon white oak	Height: 30 ft–65 ft Spread: 45 ft	Su	D	Also called garry oak. Often found on dry, rocky slopes at low elevations. Important food source for wildlife. Slow growing.
<i>Salix spp.</i>	willows	Height: 10 ft–60 ft	Su	M, SW, PW	Most willows like wet feet, grow on streambanks, and have excellent soil-binding characteristics.
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	Western hemlock	Height: 125 ft + Spread: 40 ft	Su, PSu	M	Can be used as hedge. Not for average yard due to size. Fairly fast growth. Prefers moist, acid soil.
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Western red cedar	Height: To 200 ft Spread: 30 ft	Sh, PSu	M, SW	Found mostly in moist to wet soils, usually in shaded forests. Will grow in drier areas with rich soil.
<b>S M A L L T R E E S</b>					
<i>Acer circinatum</i>	vine maple	Height: 5 ft–35 ft Spread: 20 ft	Sh, PSu	M	Often grows in conifer forest understory. Very shade tolerant, can be sprawling in the shade; excellent fall color.
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Western serviceberry	Height: 4 ft–18 ft	Su, PSu	M, SW	Can grow up to 30 ft in ideal conditions. Edible fruit. Good fall color. Prefers good soil and moderate water. White flowers in May.
<i>Ceanothus velutinus</i> <i>var. Laevigatus</i>	mountain balm	Height: 20 ft	Su	D	Also called sticky laurel, buckbrush, and cinnamon bush. Once established, resents watering. White flowers in June.
<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Western hazelnut	Height: 5 ft–18 ft	Su, PSu	M	Good hedgerow shrub. Male catkins attractive. Also called hazel nut or filbert.
<b>S H R U B S</b>					
<i>Daphne odora</i>	fragrant daphne	Height: 3 ft–5 ft	Sh, Su	D, M	Early blooming, very fragrant flower. Not native to Pacific northwest.
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	salal	Height: 1 ft–6 ft	Sh, Su	D, M	Common in a variety of habitats, from bogs to dry, well-drained slopes. Makes an excellent ground cover. Low-growing in dry, sunny conditions; much taller in moist, shady conditions.
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> or <i>Berberis aquifolium</i>	tall Oregon grape	Height: 5 ft–8 ft	Su, PSu	M	Needs well-drained soil. Good in hedge, good barrier plant. Not as tolerant of dry conditions as the two low-growing varieties.
<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	Western mock orange	Height: 4 ft–12 ft	Su, PSu	D, M	Erect, loosely branched shrub. May–June bloom, very fragrant. Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions.
<i>Rhododendron macrophyllum</i>	Pacific rhododendron	Height: 4 ft–15 ft	Sh, PSu	M	Flowers very showy. Blooms most profuse in clearings or forest edge. Slow growing; can be difficult to establish.
<i>Rhododendron occidentale</i>	Western azalea	Height: 14 ft	Su, PSu	M	Often forms dense thickets. Clusters of beautiful white or pink flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds.
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	red-flowering currant	Height: 3 ft–9 ft	Su, Sh	D, M	Very attractive, erect, shrub with red, tubular flowers that bloom early in the spring.
<i>Rosa pisocarpa</i>	swamp rose	Height: 4 ft–10 ft	Su, PSu	M, SW	Also called clustered rose because the pink flowers usually occur in groups of 3–20. Produces small purplish, pear-shaped hips.
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>	evergreen huckleberry	Height: 3 ft–12 ft	Sh, PSu	M	Attractive ornamental with shiny, leathery leaves. Shiny purple-black berries are edible. Grows taller in shade.
<b>G R O U N D C O V E R S</b>					
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	kinnickinnick	Height: 2 in–6 in Spread: To 15 ft	Su, PSu	D/M	Also called bearberry. Excellent on slopes too steep for lawn. Slow to start; mulch to keep down weeds until established. Drought tolerant once established.
<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	bunchberry	Height: 6 in	Sh, PSu	M	Also called dwarf dogwood. Very low growing ground cover, likes rich, moist soil, spreading. White flower.
<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	coastal strawberry	Height: 3 in	Su, PSu	M	Sometimes called beach strawberry. Shiny dark green leaves.
<i>Gaultheria ovatifolia</i>	Oregon wintergreen	Height: 6 in–18 in	Sh, PSu	M	Good for wetlands. Can grow in deep shade.
<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	twinflower	Height: 6 in	Su, PSu	M	Creeping, semi-woody evergreen shrub with delicate, fragrant flowers.
<i>Mahonia nervosa</i>	low Oregon grape	Height: 1 ft–3 ft	Sh, Su	D, M	Also called creeping Oregon grape. Good barrier plant. Tolerates dry, sunny sites and dry shade.
<b>H E R B A C E O U S S P E C I E S / G R A S S E S</b>					
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow	Height: 12 in–24 in	Su, PSu	D	Easy to grow, can spread quickly. Drought tolerant, requires well-drained soil and can grow in nutrient poor soil.
<i>Allium species</i>	wild onion	Height: 6 in–18 in	Su	M	Native species usually grow in rocky, exposed sites; need ample water when growing but not when dormant. Blooms in May or June.
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	pearly everlasting	Height: 12 in–24 in	Su, PSu	D, M	Tends to grow in clumps. Long-lasting white flowers that retain their color when dried. Some consider it a weedy species.
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	red columbine	Height: 12 in–18 in	Su, PSu	M	Easy to start from seed. Prefers light shade but can grow in wide variety of settings. One of our most beautiful wildflowers; spring bloom. Flowers attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies.
<i>Asarum caudatum</i>	wild ginger	Height: 3 in–6 in	Sh	M	Heart-shaped, velvety leaves.

BOTANICAL NAME	COMMON NAME	MATURE SIZE (TYPICAL)	 LIGHT NEEDS	 WATER NEEDS	COMMENTS
<b>HERBACEOUS SPECIES / GRASSES, continued</b>					
<i>Aster</i> species	aster	Height: 1 ft–3 ft	Su	D, M	Late summer and fall bloom. There are several native asters that can grow in a variety of settings.
<i>Balsamorhiza</i> species	balsamroot	Height: 1 ft–3 ft	Su	D	Spectacular yellow bloom.
<i>Camassia quamash</i> and <i>Camassia leichtlinii</i>	common camas and large camas	Height: 1 ft–2.5 ft	Su, PSu	SW, M	Can be used in wet meadow or wetland settings. Late spring or early summer bloom. Tolerates heavy soil.
<i>Carex obnupta</i> and <i>Carex unilateralis</i>	slough sedge and lateral sedge	Height: varies (8 in–46 in)	Su, PSu	M, SW, PW	Wetland plants with many native species. Grasslike with triangular stems. Require summer watering. Slough sedge is evergreen.
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	tufted hairgrass	Height: 12 in–48 in	Su, PSu	M, SW, PW	Densely tufted perennial grass. Grows in bunches.
<i>Dicentra formosa</i>	Western bleeding heart	Height: 6 in–12 in	Sh, PSu	M	Large fernlike leaves. April to June bloom. Prefers rich soil. Does well along stream banks. Pink-purple heart-shaped flower.
<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>	wooly sunflower	Height: 6 in–12 in	Su	D	Also called Oregon sunshine or golden yarrow. Sunflower-like flowers on long stalks above wooly gray leaves. Blooms May–August.
<i>Iris tenax</i>	Oregon iris	Height: 10 in–20 in	Su	M	Showy, clumped perennial with narrow, grasslike leaves
<i>Juncus ensifolius</i> , and other <i>Juncus</i> species	swordleaf rush and other rushes	Height: varies	Su	M,	Use in wetland or riparian areas. They provide excellent soil-binding for erosion control. Common rush ( <i>Juncus effusus</i> ) can be invasive; avoid in home landscapes.
<i>Lonicera ciliosa</i>	orange honeysuckle	Height: 15 ft–20 ft	Su, PSu	D/M	Also called trumpet vine. Found on margins of wooded areas. Orange flowers attract hummingbirds and swallowtail butterflies.
<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	large-leaved lupine	Height: 24 in–60 in	Su, Sh	M/D	Short-lived perennial that sometimes reseeds itself. Tolerates broad range of conditions. Long-stalked purple flower.
<i>Maianthemum dilatatum</i>	false lily of the valley	Height: 3 in–15 in	Sh, PSu	M, SW	Grows near shaded or moist stream banks. Forms dense ground cover. White flowers on a delicate stem.
<i>Oxalis oregana</i>	Oregon oxalis	Height: 2 in–6 in	Sh	M	Also called redwood sorrel or wood sorrel. Ground-hugging plant with clover-shaped leaves. Edible leaves.
<i>Penstemon serrulatus</i>	Cascade penstemon	Height: 10 in–24 in	Su, PSu	M	Sometimes called coast penstemon. Dark blue to purple flowers in large clusters at end of stem.
<i>Scirpus microcarpus</i>	small-fruited bulrush	Height: 2 ft–5 ft	Su	PW, M	Grasslike plant common in wetlands and roadside ditches. Good soil-binding characteristics. Spreads fairly rapidly.
<i>Sedum spatulifolium</i>	spatula-leaf stonecrop	Height: 3 in–8 in	Su, PSu	D, M	Pale yellow flowers. Leaves vary in color from gray-green to deep red, becoming more reddish in full sun.
<i>Sisyrinchium douglasii</i>	grass-widow	Height: 4 in–16 in	Su	M, SW	Showy, tufted perennial. Leaves like iris but much smaller. Reddish-purple spring bloom. Does well on edge of streams.
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	false Solomon's seal	Height: 12 in–36 in	Sh, PSu	M, SW	Similar to star-flowered Solomon's seal. Good ornamental in shady gardens. Large, many-branched flower clusters.
<i>Smilacina stellata</i>	star-flowered Solomon's seal	Height: 12 in–24 in	Sh, PSu	M, D	Small perennial, usually found in rocky but moist soil. White flower clusters.
<i>Tellima grandiflora</i>	fringe cup	Height: 12 in–36 in	Sh, PSu	M	Basal leaves with long, hairy stalks. Flowers greenish-white.
<i>Tolmiea menziesii</i>	piggyback plant	Height: 12 in–24 in	Sh	M, SW	Good along stream banks. Often used as houseplant.
<i>Trillium ovatum</i>	Western trillium	Height: 6 in–18 in	Sh, PSu	M	Early spring bloom. Attractive flower. Prefer acidic soil.
<i>Vancouveria hexandra</i>	inside-out flower	Height: 8 in	Sh, Su	D, M	Also called ducks foot, because of the shape of the leaf.
<i>Viola glabella</i>	stream violet	Height: 4 in–12 in	PSu, Sh	M	Small but showy yellow flowers. Heart-shaped leaves.
<b>FERNS</b>					
<i>Adiantum aleuticum</i>	maidenhair fern	Height: 12 in–24 in	PSu, Sh	M	Delicate, black-stemmed fern. Unusual in appearance and very attractive.
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	lady fern	Height: 24 in–48 in	Su, PSu	M	Often form dense populations in moist, wooded areas and along stream banks.
<i>Blechnum spicant</i>	deer fern	Height: 12 in–36 in	Su, PSu	M, SW	Found in moist conifer forests. Two kinds of fronds: horizontal outer frond, erect center frond.
<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	sword fern	Height: 24 in–48 in	Sh, PSu	D, M	Grows in wide variety of conditions. Probably the best known fern in Pacific northwest. Excellent plant for dry shade.

**Note:** Thanks to City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services for the use of this plant list. This is not a complete list of plants native to the Portland area. It does include those most commonly used in residential settings, most readily available at retail nurseries, and plants suited to a wide range of growing conditions. The Portland Plant List can be found at [www.portlandonline.com](http://www.portlandonline.com).

 **Light Needs**

- Su: Full Sun
- PSu: Partial Sun
- Sh: Full Shade
- Su, PSu: Full Sun to Partial Sun
- Sh, PSu: Full Shade to Partial Sun
- Su, Sh: Sun to Shade (prefers sun)
- Sh, Su: Shade to Sun (prefers shade)

 **Water Needs**

- SW: Seasonally Wet
- PW: Perennially Wet
- M: Moist
- D: Dry

**For more information about these and other native plants, visit [www.metro-region.org/nature](http://www.metro-region.org/nature).**





## NATURAL GARDENING BASICS

**1. Build healthy soil.** Soil is the key to the health of your garden, and compost is the key to the health of your soil. Compost – which can be made from decayed plant materials and added to the soil as an amendment or mulch – improves drainage, adds nutrients and feeds helpful soil organisms like earthworms. Compost also helps conserve valuable water.

**2. Grow appropriate plants.** Plants that are well adapted to your garden require fewer fertilizers and pesticides and less work. Native plants are an excellent choice because they are adapted to our soil and climate so they need relatively little or no added water, fertilizers or care once established. Native plants also tend to be less susceptible to pests and diseases and attract birds and butterflies to your garden. These good bugs pollinate plants, fight pests and feed birds.

Since lawns often take the most water and fertilizer, alternatives like mulch, porous paving and drought tolerant plants are a natural choice. You can also learn to care for your lawn without the use of chemicals.

**3. Use non-toxic pest management.** You can prevent most pests, weeds and diseases by building healthy soil, growing appropriate plants and using mulches. Avoiding pesticides will also spare beneficial insects who can help you fight pests.

Learn what you can about the pest, weed or disease problem you face and use the safest solution possible. Try to tolerate a little damage, pick pests off by hand, or change watering habits. As a last resort, choose non-toxic and less-toxic organic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.

**4. Attend one of Metro’s Natural Gardening seminars.** Metro offers free natural gardening seminars to help you garden chemical-free. You can learn to compost, attract butterflies, birds and other wildlife to your yard, build a worm bin, create a rain garden and more. These seminars are held in the spring, March through June, or you can schedule a seminar for your group anytime. Call Metro Recycling information at (503) 234-3000 for more information or check the website for a schedule of events.

Homes using “green” practices are not only good for your health, they are also good for the fish, wildlife, water quality and natural areas in our region. You are helping to keep nature in neighborhoods by choosing to use these practices.

To learn more, visit [www.metro-region.org/nature](http://www.metro-region.org/nature).



Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region’s economy.

### Your Metro representatives

- Metro Council President –**  
David Bragdon
- Metro Councilors –**  
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Brian Newman, District 2  
Carl Hosticka, District 3  
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## Partners in the use of green development practices:

