



# Field Guide

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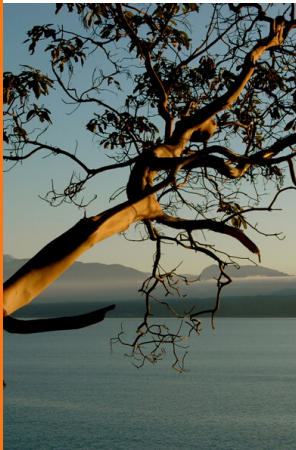
# Native Plants

Native plants have evolved to fit their ecosystems over thousands or even millions of years. Humans rely on plants for food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and more. Indigenous people have lived in an area for thousands of years and have learned what, when, and how to use their native plant species. Learning about native plant species and traditional Indigenous uses can help us be more connected to where we live.

This guide includes common native plants that you can look for right in your own neighborhood. Many of these plants are edible for humans! If you are going to pick some, here are some foraging reminders:

## How to Forage

- Only harvest food plants you are 100% certain you can identify!
  - Not all plants are edible, and some plants have lookalikes that may not be edible.
- Get to know your environment!
  - Is the edible plant you're harvesting somewhere people are spraying chemicals, close to lots of traffic, or where dogs like to pee? Find a different spot!
- Ask first.
  - If you want to forage from someone's yard, ask them first! And ask the plants if you can pick from them, too. It's only polite.
- If there's a lot, you can take a little.
  - Foragers know that if you take all of something, there won't be any left for other people or animals, and the plant may not grow back. A few good guidelines are:
    - Don't harvest from the first plant you see
    - Only take 1 out of every 10 of what you're harvesting
    - Don't harvest if you can tell other people have been harvesting there.
- Show your gratitude.
  - Most foraging traditions include giving a gift to the land before foraging in recognition that we live in relationship with the plants we forage. Your gift should be something that is meaningful to you. It might be
    - physical, like tobacco, grain, or another natural offering that will decompose easily
    - a prayer or statement of thanks
    - an act of service like cleaning up litter or removing invasive species
    - or a combination of all of those!



# Native Plants

## Red Flowering Currant

### *Ribes sanguineum*

Red flowering currants have leaves that look like small maple leaves, and smell delicious. In the spring they have bright red droops of flowers - these are edible and make great cake decorations!

## Arbutus

### *Arbutus menziesii*

This is an important medicinal tree - the Saanich nations use the bark and leaves to treat illnesses like colds, sore throats, stomach aches, or if you have a cut! Look for its orange bark and shiny leaves.

## Salal

### *Gaultheria shallon*

Salal is full of vitamins and antioxidants - you can make its leaves into a tea! Salal is currently in bloom: look for its little white bell-shaped flowers and round evergreen leaves with a point at the tip.

## Bigleaf Maple

### *Acer macrophyllum*

All parts of this tree are useful - the bark can be used for baskets and rope, the flowers are edible, the leaves make good containers... see how many different ways you can use these giant leaves!

# Native Plants



## **Thimbleberry**

### **Rubus parviflorus**

Thimbleberry plants have bright red berries that are ready at the end of July, they look like big raspberries and taste delicious. Right now, look for their wide flat leaves and white flowers.



## **Douglas Fir**

### **Pseudotsuga menziesii**

A good way to tell coniferous trees apart is their cones. Douglas fir cones have three little points that come out of each cone scale. Look for the tallest coniferous tree where you are - it's probably a Douglas Fir!



## **Nootka Rose**

### **Rosa nutkana**

There are so many lovely roses blooming right now, but the Nootka rose is the only native rose species. Its petals are edible and aromatic! Look for the pink flowers and count the petals: there should be five!



## **Oregon Grape**

### **Mahonia nervosa**

This plant is not actually related to grapes! The berries can be eaten; they are sour good for you and make great jelly. It grows in shady areas, so in the city, look under coniferous trees or beside buildings.

# Native Plants



## Western Hemlock

### *Tsuga heterophylla*

This indigenous coniferous tree has the cutest little cones! It's very tall like a Douglas fir, but Western Hemlock has much smaller, bendier needles. Its sap makes a great water-resistant glue.



## Kinnikinnick

### *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*

Kinnikinnick is an Algonquin word that means "smoking mixture". Its scientific name means: "bear-berry berry-bear"! It grows low to the ground, so look carefully. Look for its pink and white bell flowers.



## Western Red Cedar

### *Thuja plicata*

To find this tree, look for its red bark and drooping branches. These trees can get huge! Canada's largest and oldest tree is the Cheetwat Cedar - a red cedar on Vancouver Island that is 2,000 years old!



## Red Huckleberry

### *Vaccinium parvifolium*

This plant has beautiful bright green branches and leaves -to find it, look in shady garden spaces. The bright red berries are ready to eat at the end of July. Right now: look for its small white flowers.

# Native Plants



**Grand Fir**  
***Abies grandis***

This coniferous tree may look a lot like a Douglas Fir, but check the needles - Grand Fir needles are long and very flat. The best way to tell if it's a Grand Fir: the needles smell like grapefruit!



**Ocean Spray**  
***Holodiscus discolor***

Ocean Spray is blooming right now - its flowers look like the foam on top of a wave! Its wood is very strong, so it is used by many indigenous communities to make tools and utensils.



**Snowberry**  
***Symphoricarpos albus***

These shrubs make great bird homes, since predators can't get through the branches. This plant has white berries in the winter. They look nice, but aren't edible! Right now, look for its small pink flowers.



**Garry Oak**  
***Quercus garryana***

Garry oak trees are a very important part of many local ecosystems; thousands of plants and animals live in Garry oak ecosystems. These oak leaves are small and very round-looking compared to other oaks.



# NATIVE PLANT NEIGHBORHOOD BINGO



Flowering Red  
Currant



Arbutus



Salal



Big Leaf Maple



Thimble Berry



Douglas Fir



Nootka  
Rose



Oregon  
Grape



Western  
Hemlock



Kinnikinnik



Red Cedar



Red  
Huckleberry



Grand Fir



Ocean Spray



Snowberry



Garry Oak

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