



# PLANTS for Marine Shorelines

Shorelines are very sensitive and dynamic areas, subjected to frequent environmental disturbance. Landscape plantings must be very hardy and tolerant of salt, wind and alternating wet and dry conditions.

The safest and surest strategy for landscape success and environmental protection is to maintain existing native vegetation. In situations in which the natural vegetative cover has been removed or where enhancement of the existing vegetation is desired, some recommended plants are listed below.

Most of the plants are native to Strait of Juan de Fuca shorelines. Some dune, salt marsh and mudflat species may be hard to find in nurseries, and collecting from the wild is not recommended. Many plants that grow in dune environments will also grow in salt marshes and mudflats.

The plant lists include categories specific to sandy or gravelly dunes and marshes or mudflats. The “Zone” categories refer to areas other than dunes and mudflats. These zones are based on conditions of soil moisture and salt water tolerance that are typical of conditions found along shoreline properties.

## DUNES, SALT MARSHES and MUDFLATS

Dunes are fragile and dynamic, sandy or gravelly environments subject to persistent wind and tidal action. Seasonal high tides and storm events inundate these areas with salt water.

Salt marshes and mudflats typically have fine-grained soils and high water tables. They are fragile environments subject to regular tidal inundation.

### ZONES 1 and 2

Zone 1 is characterized by a seasonal high water table and/or ponding on the surface. Plants for this area must be tolerant of wind, salt spray, saturated soil conditions, and rare and brief salt water inundation. The plants in this category are not tolerant of daily tidal inundation.

Upland of ZONE 1 is Zone 2. Plants for this zone are tolerant of well drained and dry soil conditions that may become seasonally wet due to a high water table or surface ponding. All plants are tolerant of wind and salt spray but do not tolerate frequent tidal inundation. All trees and shrubs listed for ZONE 1 are suitable for ZONE 2.

## DUNES

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Abronia</i> spp. Sand Verbena	Sun	Ground- cover	Spring/ Summer	Yellow and pink flowering species
<i>Carex macrocephala</i> Large-headed Sedge	Sun/ Part Shade	4-16 inches		Well drained, sandy soils
<i>Convolvulus soldanella</i> Beach Morning-Glory	Sun	Ground- cover		Well drained, sandy soils; pinkish-purple flowers
<i>Distichlis spicata</i> Seashore Saltgrass	Sun	<1 foot		Moist to seasonally saturated soils; rhizomatous
<i>Elymus mollis</i> Native Beach Grass	Sun	2-5 feet		AVOID European beach grass, which is very invasive
<i>Glehnia littoralis</i> Beach-Carrot	Sun	Ground- cover		Well drained, sandy soils
<i>Jaumea carnosa</i> Fleshy Jaumea	Sun	Ground- cover		Succulent occurring at or just above mean high tide level; spreads by rhizomes
<i>Poa macrantha</i> Seashore Bluegrass	Sun	6-16 inches		Well drained, sandy soils; rhizomatous

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<i>Potentilla anserina</i> Pacific Silverweed	Sun	1-2 feet	July	Moist to dry soils; yellow flowers
<i>Salicornia virginica</i> Pickleweed	Sun	Ground-cover		Tidally inundated sites

## SALT MARSHES and MUDFLATS

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Carex lyngbyei</i> Lyngby Sedge	Sun/ Part Shade	6-40 inches		Moist to seasonally saturated soils; rhizomatous
<i>Carex obnupta</i> Slough Sedge	Sun/ Part Shade	1-5 feet		Moist to seasonally saturated soils; shiny foliage; excellent soil binder; drought tolerant
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> Tufted Hairgrass	Sun	2-6 feet		Moist to seasonally flooded soils; grows in dense hummocks
<i>Juncus effusus</i> Common Rush	Sun/ Part Shade	2-3 feet	Summer	Wet soils; evergreen perennial; hardy and adaptable; drought tolerant
<i>Juncus supiniformis</i> Spreading Rush	Sun	6-30 inches		Moist to inundated soils; stoloniferous, forming uniform mats
<i>Scirpus acutus</i> Hardstem Bulrush	Sun	4-8 feet		Wet soils; favors prolonged inundation; excellent soil binder; rhizomatous
<i>Scirpus americanus</i> Three-square Bulrush	Sun	6-40 inches		Wet soils; rhizomatous
<i>Scirpus maritimus</i> Seacoast Bulrush	Sun	1-5 feet		Tidally inundated sites; rhizomatous
<i>Triglochin maritima</i> Seaside Arrowgrass	Sun	1-4 feet		Mud flat colonizer

## ZONE 1 – TREES

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Pinus contorta contorta</i> Shore Pine	Sun	to 60' tall		Dry, gravelly to saturated bog soils low in nutrients; fast growing; does not tolerate competition for light

## ZONE 1 – SHRUBS

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Myrica californica</i> * Pacific Wax Myrtle	Sun/ Part Shade	To 30 feet	May - June	Evergreen shrub/small tree preferring moist soils; inconspicuous spring flowers; drought tolerant
<i>Myrica gale</i> Sweetgale	Sun/ Part Shade	To 6 feet	May - June	Deciduous shrub preferring moist soils; inconspicuous spring flowers
<i>Rosa nutkana</i> Nootka Rose	Sun/ Part Shade	6-10 feet	May - June	Moist to fairly dry soils; tolerates inundation and saturated soils; aggressive spreader; fruits persist
<i>Rosa rugosa</i> ** Rugosa Rose	Sun	To 8 feet	Summer	Drought resistant; hardy, vigorous and aggressive; highly prickly; fragrant white to purple flowers; fruits persist
<i>Salix hookeriana</i> Hooker Willow	Sun	To 26' tall	April	Wet soils; tolerates seasonal flooding



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## ZONE 2 – TREES

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i> Madrona	Sun	To 90' tall 40' spread	Spring	Well drained soils; broad-leafed evergreen; white flowers, orange-red berries
<i>Arbutus unedo</i> ** Strawberry Tree	Sun/ Part Shade	8-35' tall 8-20' spread	Late fall	Tolerant of extremes; tolerant of urban/ industrial pollution; broad-leafed evergreen; white or greenish white flowers; variety 'Compacta' grows to 10 feet
<i>Malus fusca</i> Pacific Crabapple	Sun/ Part Shade	To 40' tall 35' spread	May	Tolerant of prolonged soil saturation; produces fruit

## ZONE 2 – DECIDUOUS SHRUBS

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i> Oceanspray	Sun/ Part Shade	To 15 feet	June	Dry to moist soils; drought tolerant; fragrant white to cream flowers; good soil binder
<i>Ribes sanguinum</i> Red-flowering Currant	Sun/ Part Shade	To 8 feet	Spring	Well drained soils; pink to red flowers attract hummingbirds; bluish berries eaten by birds
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> Snowberry	Sun or Shade	2-6 feet		Wet to dry soils, clay to sand; excellent soil binder; drought tolerant; thicket-former provides good erosion control; white berries; flowers attract hummingbirds

## ZONE 2 – EVERGREEN SHRUBS and GROWDCOVERS

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> Kinnikinnick	Sun/ Part Shade	To 8 inches	Spring	Prefers sandy/rocky, well-drained soils; pinkish-white flowers; bright red berries; slow to establish; plant closely for good results
<i>Ceanothus spp.</i> ** California Lilac	Sun	To 4 feet	June- July	Needs well drained soils; dark blue flowers
<i>Cistus purpureus</i> ** Orchid Rockrose	Sun	To 4 feet	June- July	Moist to dry well-drained soils; drought resistant; fast growing; reddish purple flowers
<i>Escallonia</i> **	Sun/ Part Shade	5-6 feet	Spring - Fall	Tolerant of varying soils but prefers lower pH; drought tolerant when established; pink to rose colored flowers; good hedge or border plant; attracts butterflies
<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i> Beach strawberry	Sun/ Part Shade	To 8 inches	Spring	Sandy well drained soils; white flowers; small hairy strawberries; evergreen; aggressive spreader
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i> Salal	Sun/ Part Shade	3-7 feet	Spring	Dry and moist soils; white or pinkish flowers; reddish-blue to dark-purple fruit
<i>Juniperus spp.</i> ** Junipers	Sun/ Part Shade	vary		Includes shrubs and groundcovers
<i>Lavandula spp.</i> ** Lavender	Sun	To 2 feet	May - August	Adaptable to various soils; blue, lavender, pink to white flowers, semi-evergreen aromatic perennial
<i>Mahonia aquifolium</i> Tall Oregon Grape	Sun/ Part Shade	6-10 feet	March - April	Dry to moist soils; drought resistant; evergreen; blue-black fruit; bright yellow flowers; 'Compacta' form averages 2 feet tall
<i>Pinus mugo mugo</i> ** Mugho Pine	Sun/ Part Shade	4-8' tall 8-15' wide	April	Slow growing shrub pine
<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> ** Rosemary	Sun	6-20 feet	Winter - spring	Requires good drainage; garden herb



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## ZONE 2 – PERENNIALS & ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

SPECIES/ COMMON NAME	SUN/ SHADE	MATURE SIZE	BLOOM TIME	COMMENTS
<i>Achillea millefolium</i> Western Yarrow	Sun	4-30 inches	Summer	Dry to moist, well-drained soils; white to pink/reddish flowers; many other yarrows are also available
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i> Western Columbine	Sun/ Part Shade	1-3 feet	Spring	Moist soils of varying quality; tolerant of seasonal flooding; red and yellow flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies
<i>Armeria maritima</i> Thrift Sea Pink	Sun	2-18 inches	May	Drought tolerant perennial
<i>Aster chilensis</i> California Aster	Sun	1.5 – 3 feet	Summer	Moist soils; white to purple flowers
<i>Aster subspicatus</i> Douglas Aster	Sun	6-30 inches	Summer	Moist soils; blue to purple flowers
<i>Carex buchannii</i> ** Leather Leaf Sedge	Sun/ Part Shade	1-3 feet		Prefers well-drained soils; copper-colored foliage; perennial clumping grass; tolerant of a wide range of soils; inconspicuous flowers
<i>Carex comans</i> ** New Zealand Hair Sedge	Sun/ Part Shade	1-2 feet		Prefers moist soils; finely textured and light green; compact, clumping perennial grass; drought tolerant when established; inconspicuous flowers
<i>Erigeron speciosus</i> Showy fleabane	Sun/ Part Shade	To 2 feet	Summer	Moist to dry soils with good drainage; dark violet or lavender blooms; fibrous roots
<i>Eschscholzia californica</i> * California Poppy	Sun	To 2 feet	Summer	Dry soils with good drainage; orange blooms; native to Oregon and south but naturalized in Washington
<i>Festuca ovina glauca</i> ** Blue fescue	Sun/ Part Shade	4-10 inches		Tolerant of variety of soil types, prefers well-drained soil; clumping blue evergreen grass
<i>Helichrysum italicum</i> ** Curry Plant	Sun	To 2 feet	Summer	Moist or dry soils; hardy evergreen perennial; fragrant bright yellow flowers
<i>Helictotrichon sempervirens</i> ** Blue oat grass	Sun/ Part Shade	1-1.5 feet		Tolerant of a variety of soil types but prefers well-drained soil; clumping bright blue evergreen grass
<i>Lupinus spp.</i> Lupine	Sun	To 5 feet	Spring- summer	Moist to dry soils; blue to purple, violet to white flowers; native and non-native varieties
<i>Penstemon fruticosus</i> ** Shrubby penstemon	Sun	8–10 inches	May	Prefers well-drained soils; evergreen perennial; drought tolerant; violet-blue flowers 1" long attract hummingbirds
<i>Potentilla gracilis</i> Graceful cinquefoil	Sun	1-2 feet	July	Moist to dry soils; yellow flowers
<i>Sedum spathulifolium</i> Broad-leaved Stonecrop	Sun	6 inches		Easy to grow and attractive sedum
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i> False Solomon's Seal	Part Sun/ Shade	1-3 feet	Spring	Moist soils; creamy white flowers; red berries
<i>Solidago canadensis</i> Canadian Goldenrod	Sun/ Part Shade	1-2 feet	Aug-Oct	Dry to moist soils; yellow flowers

\* Native to southwest Washington coast and south. \*\*Non-native.