

Plant Native Trees On Your Property:

Attract Wildlife and Create Privacy



A Guide of Native Trees for Small Yards

Small Yards are Different

This guide was created with small yard landowners in mind. When you have less space, the tree selections you make are important. After speaking with small yard landowners in South Snohomish County, authors of this guide have selected a shortlist of native trees that have beautiful features, attract wildlife, are less likely to drop limbs or needles, and are on the smaller side when mature. This guide includes descriptions of those trees, planting and pruning techniques as well as suggestions on how to select the right tree for your yard.



How to Select a Tree for your Property

Pick the right tree for the space Many species become very large over time. If planted in a small area, the tree may eventually become a problem. Avoid planting large species in areas with limited space for growth: roots and/or height.







Pick the right tree for the environmental conditions Some species require full sunlight and well drained soils and will not survive in shady or wet sites, other species flourish in shaded and wet conditions. Take time to match the requirements of the species with the conditions of the desired planting spot.

Pick the right tree for the purpose

- **In the winter, do you want to add shade or keep sun?** If you want to keep the yard sunny in the winter, choose deciduous (leaf dropping) trees that will allow light to penetrate into your yard in the winter months.
- **Do you want to create privacy?** Use trees that will not lose their leaves in the winter month and retain branches low to the ground.
- **What makes a tree attractive to you?** Some trees have colorful fall leaves, spring flowers, stunning bark, interesting textures and scents. Pick what you like and look for it in your tree.

Selecting the Right Tree for the Right Location

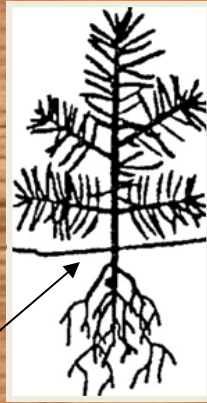
All native trees do not fare well in all locations. The best way to get the right tree for the right place is to fully assess your yard. Seasons can change conditions, so it is best to plant trees after you have lived with your property for at least a year. Complete this checklist below and select trees that will thrive in those conditions.

<p>Sunlight Levels:</p> <p>___  Full sun (>6 hours)</p> <p>___  Partial sun or filtered light</p> <p>___  Shade</p> <p>Sunlight levels change throughout the day and will change over the seasons. The best way to assess the sunlight at a desired tree planting location is to record sunlight level every two hours over 1 day and to do that three times a year. If you only go out on one day, we recommend you do this on or near the shortest day of the year.</p>	<p>Soil Moisture Level:</p> <p>___  Very Moist All Year Long</p> <p>___  Only Moist During Rainy Season</p> <p>___  Well-drained—Dry most of the year</p> <p>Snohomish County has very dry summers and very wet winters. While native trees are adapted to this climate, some trees are more suited to wet conditions than others. By noting the soil moisture level in the top 12 inches in summer and winter and buying a tree with those conditions, you are more likely to have a tree that thrives over the long-term.</p>
<p>Above and Underground Structures:</p> <p>___ Height of Overhead wires</p> <p>___ Proximity to buildings</p> <p>___ Septic System Drain field</p> <p>___ Underground utilities (Call 811 for utility location)</p> <p>___ Distance to driveway</p> <p>Trees grow a great deal from when we plant them, both above and below ground. Note if the above structures exist and the measurements for each one. Use the box to the right to sketch out these structures in your yard to get a visual of spatial limitations.</p>	<p>Draw Your Own Tree Planting Area Here!</p>

How to Plant a Tree

1. Dig a hole 2 to 3 times the size of the root ball

2. The bump below the first set of leaves or needles and above the roots is called the root collar. The soil level should meet the root collar: above or below and the tree is less likely to survive.



3. Gently fill in the hole with the soil you displaced earlier.

4. Firmly pat down the soil around the tree making sure that the tree stays firmly in place. Give your new tree a slight tug to make sure it will not move.

Common Tree Planting Mistakes



Too shallow



Turned up roots



Tangled roots



Too deep



Rock



Air Pocket

Cascara



Height when fully grown: 20'-25'



Rate of Growth: Moderate



Lifespan: about 50 years



Sunlight Preference: Mostly sunny
to mostly shady



Soil Moisture Preference: Moist
to wet soils



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: Berries are eaten by grosbeaks, woodpeckers, grouse, mourning doves, jays, robins, and tanagers. It also attracts many insectivorous birds, including bushtits, kinglets, chickadees, flycatchers, and nuthatches.

Insects: Leaves and other plant parts are eaten by swallowtail, gray hairstreak, and other butterfly larvae.

Mammals: Foxes eat the fruit.

Other Benefits:

- Erosion control
- Yellow fall foliage



**Good for small
yards**



Vine Maple



Height when fully grown: 20'-25'



Rate of Growth: Fast



Lifespan: about 60 years



Sunlight Preference: Full sun to moderate shade



Soil Moisture Preference: Well drained soil



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: Vine maple attracts grosbeaks, woodpeckers, nuthatches, finches, quail, and grouse. All of these species eat the Vine maple seeds. The leaves and stems also provide good nesting material.

Insects: A good nectar source for bees and butterflies.

Mammals: Deer will nibble on the twigs and wood in the winter.

Other Benefits:

- Beautiful fall colors
- Provides erosion control



Good for small yards



Bitter Cherry



Height when fully grown: 50'



Rate of Growth: Fast



Lifespan: about 80 years



Sunlight Preference: Full sun



Soil Moisture Preference: Moist, well drained soils



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: The cherries are a highly desirable food source for many species.

Insects: The bitter cherry flowers attract the following butterflies: Sara orangetip, silvery blue, swallowtail, Lorquins admiral, and spring azure butterflies.

Mammals: The bitter cherries are commonly eaten by squirrels, foxes, and chipmunks. Deer browse the leaves and twigs.

Other Benefits:

- Fragrant spring flowers
- Bright red cherries (inedible)
- Provides erosion control



Good for small yards



Paper Birch



Height when fully grown: Up to 98'



Rate of Growth:

Moderate to Fast



Lifespan: 140-200 years



Sunlight Preference: Full sun



Soil Moisture Preference: Wet

well drained soils



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: The seeds are eaten by finches, siskins, and grouse. Kinglets, woodpeckers, sapsuckers, warblers, nuthatches and chickadees prey on the insects that commonly use the paper birch as habitat. The peeling bark is used as nesting material and the cavities of the paper birch are used by birds for nesting and roosting sites.

Insects: The leaves are eaten by mourning cloak and swallowtail butterfly larvae. Birches provide habitat for numerous insect species.

Mammals: Hares, chipmunks, and deer browse on the leaves and twigs.

Other Benefits:

- Beautiful bark



Good for small yards



Sitka Spruce



Height when fully grown: 230'



Rate of Growth: Moderate: will reach about 90 feet in 50 years



Lifespan: 800 years



Sunlight Preference: shade tolerant



Soil Moisture Preference: Moist, well drained soils



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: Nuthatches, grosbeaks, finches, chickadees, siskins, goldfinches, crossbills, and sparrows all eat the seeds. Grouse eat the needles, sapsuckers harvest insects from the sap, and woodpeckers forage on bark beetles. Bald eagles and other predatory birds use the tree as a roost to survey the shore for prey. Some large birds of prey may use the mature trees for nests. Cavity-nesting birds and other animals use the tree cavities.

Mammals: Deer, squirrels, and chipmunks benefit from the shelter of the tree.

Other Benefits:

- New growth contains a high concentration of Vitamin C



Good for small yards



Grand Fir



Height when fully grown: 260'



Rate of Growth: slow-moderate



Lifespan: 250-300 years



Sunlight Preference: Shade tolerant



Soil Moisture Preference: Drier soils



Wildlife Benefit:

Birds: Grouse, nuthatches, chickadees, grosbeaks, finches, crossbills feed on the fir seeds. Sapsuckers and woodpeckers feed on the foliage. Provides shelter for birds.

Insects: Pine white butterfly larvae eat the leaves.

Mammals: Provides shelter for many mammals such as squirrels, porcupines, and deer.

Other Benefits:

Young Grand Fir trees have a distinct Christmas tree shape.



Good for small yards



Give your Tree the Best Chance of Survival

Water during the summer Your new native tree is most vulnerable to drought during the first few years after its been planted. Give your new tree a deep, thorough soaking once a month during the dry season to give it the best chance of survival.

Protection Many small trees are considered desirable foraging for many native animals in Washington. Depending on the wildlife in your area, consider a plant protector that wraps around the stem of the tree to protect from rodents. Also consider, taller caging to protect from beaver and deer.

Proper pruning Pruning your new native tree when it's young will lead to a long happy life for your tree, and for you! Pruning reduces the chance of the tree dropping limbs, falling over, or splitting in storms as your tree matures. For more information on pruning trees, go to www.arborday.org/trees/pruning/ for a comprehensive guide.



Can I Plant Trees on my Property?

Do you live near a stream, wetland or lake? Does your property abut a Native Growth Protection Area? To learn about the rules in your community, as well as incentives they may offer for tree planting, please check in with your local municipality, noted below.

City of Bothell: gary.hassler@ci.bothell.wa.us or 425-486-2768

City of Edmonds: kernen.lien@edmondswa.gov or 425-771-0220

City of Lynnwood: <http://www.ci.lynnwood.wa.us/>
search: Tree Regulations and Information

Unincorporated Snohomish County: Kirk.Prindle@co.snohomish.wa.us
or 425-388-3311

Additional Resources

- **Washington Native Plant Society:** <http://www.wnps.org/>
- **King County Native Plant Guide:** <https://green.kingcounty.gov/GoNative/>
- **Better Ground:** <http://www.betterground.org/>
- **WADNR Webster Nursery :** http://www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/frc_webster_plantingforestseedlings.prdf
- **Native Trees of Western Washington: A photographic Guide** by Kevin Zobrist
- **Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia & Alaska** by Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon
- **Planting Trees/Shrubs W WA.** by Forest and Wildlife Extension.

Other Native Trees and Tall Shrubs

Big Leaf Maple	Pacific Willow
Douglas Fir	Beaked Hazelnut
Western Red Cedar	Indian Plum
Red Alder	Red Elderberry
Serviceberry	Western Hemlock

Before purchasing a native tree or shrub, it is recommended that you determine if they are right for your property. Researching their height at maturity, sun preference, and soil moisture are all extremely important before purchasing a native species.

Many of Washington's native species live 50-200 years—a lifetime investment.

Photo credits:

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Sound Salmon Solutions

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