



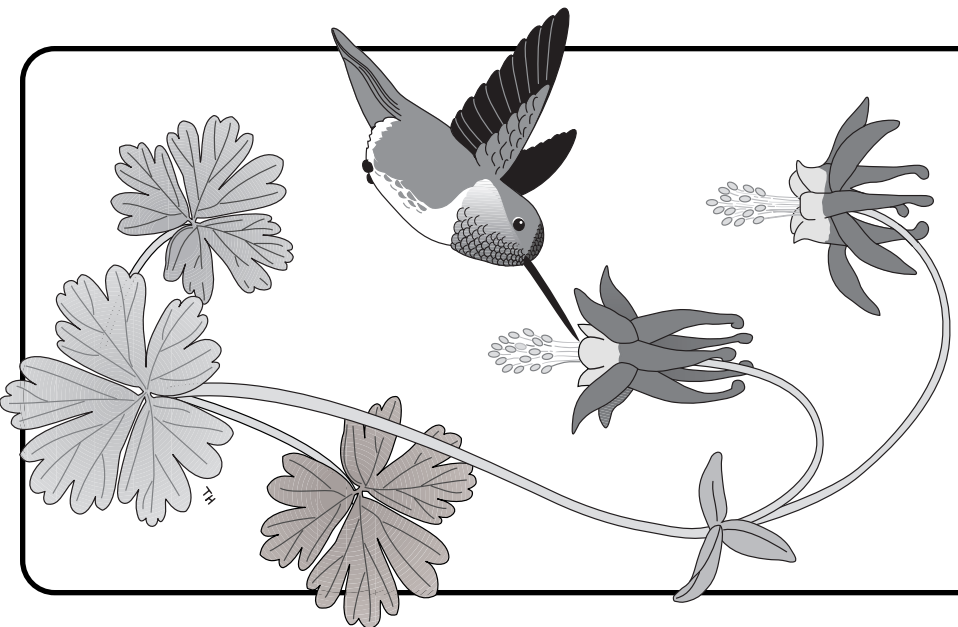
Native Plant Society of Oregon  
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a member of Earth Share  
OF OREGON

## Native Plant Society of Oregon

# Guidelines for the Use of NATIVE PLANTS for GARDENING



## Gardening with Native Plants

*Pacific Northwest natives can satisfy aesthetically, practically, and ecologically.*

*Grow them and enjoy them. Whether you “go native” all the way or mix natives with plants from other lands, you can expect pleasure from the beauty that natives can bring to your garden.*

~ Art Kruckeberg, from *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest* (1996)

**H**ave you walked through a meadow and been impressed with the colorful array of native wildflowers? Do you enjoy the beauty of natural areas that you visit in Oregon? Do you like watching birds or butterflies use plants for the different resources they provide? Are you interested in protecting or enhancing natural areas in your community? If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, you may also be interested in incorporating native plants into your home garden.

Growing natives in your garden is a great way to gain familiarity with native plants. In addition, using native plants in your garden can be a logical extension of your concern for preserving some of Oregon’s natural heritage. In your garden, you can provide habitat for native plants and the great array of animals and other organisms that depend on them.

The Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO) encourages you to grow Oregon native plants in your garden. However, while there are several hundred plants native to Oregon that make good garden plants, not all are native to your area of Oregon. The purpose of this document is to outline guidelines that the NPSO hopes you will follow to maximize the ecological and practical benefits of native plant gardening.

## Guidelines for gardening with native plants

By following these guidelines, you will be able to grow natives successfully in your garden and enjoy the beauty and ecological benefits of native plants.

**Use plants that are native to your ecoregion** (see map). What is an ecoregion? Ecoregions are areas that are relatively uniform in soils, vegetation, climate, geology, and wildlife. Ten ecoregions are recognized in Oregon. Plants from within your ecoregion are most likely to do well in your garden.

**Choose plants that grow well in the unique conditions of your garden.** The particular conditions of soil type, soil moisture, and amount of sunlight may vary in different parts of your garden. You will want to select the right plants to fit the various conditions present. For example, if part of your yard doesn’t drain well, you could plant natives that grow naturally in boggy places. Local NPSO chapters may have lists of native plants in your ecoregion, along with descriptions of the conditions under which they grow best. Study your locally native plants where they grow in the wild and observe the conditions in which they are growing. There are numerous field guides and several gardening books that can help you identify your locally native plants and may describe suitable conditions for growing them.

**Select plants that originated from as close to your home as possible.** Plants that occur in your ecoregion and that originate close to your garden site are locally native. By using locally native plants, you will preserve the natural heritage of your community. In addition, you will have a higher probability of successfully establishing the plants than if you use plants that originated from far away.

**Select healthy-looking plants.** Healthy plants exhibit vigorous growth, are not wilted, have good foliage color, and are free of insect damage and spots on the leaves. Healthy nursery plants will have a good chance of growing well in your garden. But remember, once they are growing well in your garden, native plants may attract caterpillars, butterflies, and other animals that depend on these plants for their own survival. Welcome these visitors! Attracting these animals to your garden is one of the many benefits of gardening with natives!

**For best results, plant in the spring or fall.** At other times of the year, plants will need greater amounts of attention (e.g., watering) in order to flourish. Be aware that even drought-tolerant natives require supplemental water until they are established and that not every plant you choose may grow well. Enjoy experimenting with different native plants from the ecoregion and microsite types appropriate for your particular garden.

**Avoid using invasive non-native plants.** If you choose to plant non-natives, research their growth habits first. Beware of plants described as “vigorous.” Non-native invasive plants are a serious cause of habitat destruction because they take over and exclude native plants and the animals that depend upon them. Many of these were originally imported as garden ornamentals. For lists of invasive, non-native plants, visit one of the web sites listed at the end of this document.

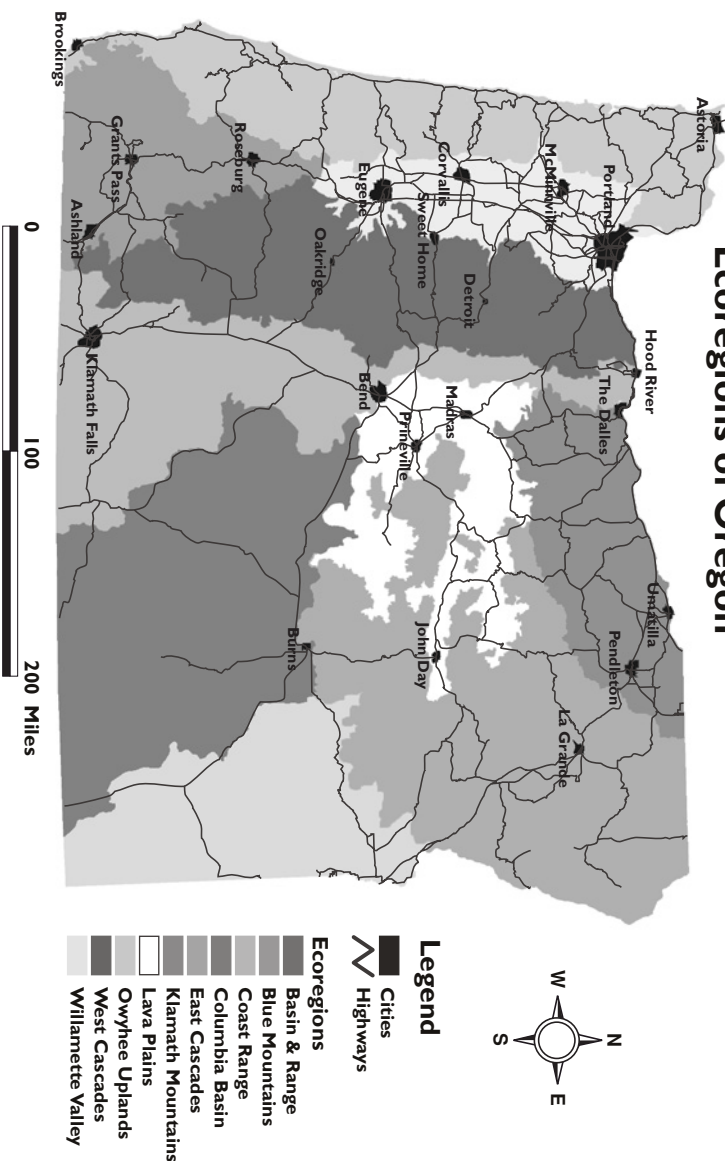
## Sources of native plants

Once you have determined what locally native plants would grow well in your garden, you are left with another challenge—finding a place where you can obtain or purchase them. Fortunately, the demand for native plants is steadily increasing and many nurseries now specialize in native plants, while others carry a selection of natives along with non-native ornamentals.

Here are a few tips on how to find locally native plants, and how you can encourage an increasing availability of native plants in the future:

**Contact local nurseries.** If they have a selection of native plants, show your appreciation for this. Ask about the source of the plant material and the propagation method used by the nursery. Ideally, the plants should be propagated from seeds or cuttings within your ecoregion and not wild-collected. For more on propagation techniques see the NPSO policy on ethical propagation on our website.

## Ecoregions of Oregon



The ten ecoregions of Oregon, as depicted by the Oregon Natural Heritage Program and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. For more information see <http://www.natureserve.org/nhp/us/or/tebook.pdf>.

Visit the NPSO website to get contacts for your local chapter, and attend your local NPSO chapter meetings and field trips. Many NPSO members are active native plant gardeners, and know sources for locally native plants.

**Do not transplant from the wild.** Unless their natural habitat is threatened by immediate destruction, and you have obtained landowner permission, transplanting native plants to your garden is strongly discouraged because it can damage natural plant communities. In addition, state law forbids the collection of many plant species.

## Benefits of gardening with locally native plants

- If you establish locally native plants in your garden, you will reap numerous benefits such as:
  - Growing locally native plants in your garden helps ensure habitat for plants and the animals that depend on them. For example, many of our native butterflies depend on a single native plant species during their caterpillar stage.
  - Many native plants are very attractive.
  - Locally native plants are adapted to local soil and climate conditions, making many of them easier to maintain than non-native species.
  - Planting locally native plants reduces the risk of introducing invasive plants into your community.
  - Using locally native plants, rather than natives from elsewhere, prevents the unique genetic makeup of native plants in your area from being altered.

## For more information

- Alden, P. et al. 1998. *National Audubon Society Guide to the Pacific Northwest*. Knopf, New York.
- City of Portland Bureau of Planning. 1997. *Portland Environmental Handbook*.
- Guard, B. J. 1995. *Wetland Plants of Oregon and Washington*. Lone Pine Publishing, Renton, Washington.
- Kruckeberg, A.R. 1996. *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*. Second edition, revised and enlarged. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington, (highly recommended!).

Mathews, D. 1999. *Cascade-Olympic Natural History*. Second edition, updated and expanded. Raven Editions, Portland, Oregon.

Pojar, J., and A. MacKinnon. 1994. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast*. Lone Pine Publishing, Renton, Washington.

Rose, R., C.E. Chauchalski, and D.L. Haase. 1998. *Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants*. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, Oregon.

Strickler, D. 1993. *Wayside Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest*. The Flower Press, Columbia Falls, Montana.

Wilson, M.V., D.E. Hibbs, and E.R. Alverson. 1991. Native plants, native ecosystems, and native landscapes: an ecological definition of “native” will promote effective conservation and restoration. *Kalmijps*: 13-17.

## Web sites

### Native Plants

Native Plant Society of Oregon  
<http://www.NPSOoregon.org/>

California Native Plant Society  
<http://www.cnps.org/>

Idaho Native Plant Society  
<http://www.idahonativeplants.org/>

Washington Native Plant Society  
<http://www.wnps.org/>

City of Portland  
[http://www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/tlb\\_plantlist.html](http://www.planning.ci.portland.or.us/tlb_plantlist.html)

City of Salem  
[http://www.open.org/~naturalr/Plants/plant\\_index.htm](http://www.open.org/~naturalr/Plants/plant_index.htm)

Nearby Nature  
<http://www.plantnative.org/>

### Butterfly Gardening

North American Butterfly Association  
 Eugene-Springfield Chapter  
<http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabae/btrfly-gding1.html>

### Invasive and Non-native Plants

The Nature Conservancy, Wildland Invasive Species  
<http://inweeds.ucdavis.edu/>

USDA, Natural Resources and Conservation Service  
<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/wilnews/spsun09.htm>

USDA, Noxious weed home page:  
<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/weeds/>