

Volume 6, Issue 3-2008

March 2008

Northwest Native Plant Journal

A Monthly Web Magazine

Picking Plants--choosing the right native

Chickadee Realty

A story from Sharon Stiteler

Fighting Gardening Enemy #1

Published by The Wild Garden: Hansen's Northwest Native Plant Database

Northwest Native Plant Journal

A Monthly Web Magazine

In Every Issue

About this Journal.....	3
On the Cover.....	4
Native Plant Puzzle <i>Name this plant!</i>	5
Garden chores to do now.....	6
Sparky's Corner.....	7
This & That Notes from Jennifer.....	30
Native Plant Resources Information on the Web..	27

Trillium ovatum



Featured Articles

Picking Plants

Select the right native for your spot.....9

Chickadee Realty

Story by Sharon Stiteler.....17

Chickadee Favorites.....19

Peaceful Partners

Diversity in the garden.....20

Slugs!

Gardening enemy #1.....23

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About this Web Magazine

This Journal was created under the direction of Wally Hansen – a dedicated Grower, Aficionado and Passionate Lover of Northwest Native Plants.

This Journal is not 'commercial.' Our goals are:

- A** — To generate interest, even passion, concerning the magnificent Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest.
- B** — To help you create your own Native Plant Gardens, large or small, for home or work.
- C** — To help you propagate and “grow on” those species that interest you the most.
- D** — To inform both Home Gardeners and interested Professionals of many disciplines concerning trends and news items from my little corner of the world.
- E** — To help the reader enjoy native plants more by understanding the historical and cultural role of native plants (i.e.—use by Native Americans, Pioneers, Early Botanists, etc.).



Western Trillium
(*Trillium ovatum* ssp. *ovatum*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott



On the Cover

Lewisia

Lewisia are not what one would typically think of as a plant native to the northwest, but they are, indeed, native here. Though their range goes from British Columbia down to northern California and inland to the Rockies, the majority of them grow in the Klamath range of southern Oregon to northern California where there is very little rainfall.

Lewisia are not, for the most part, endangered but it is on the federal watchlist as a "species of concern." Many areas where it was once common have not seen any Lewisia for years. Its foremost enemy: illegal collectors who dig them up for sale.

Fortunately, many nurseries who focus on native plants are now propagating these striking plants for sale.

If you've got a sunny space with good drainage, consider this wonderful native perennial.



Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Native plant puzzle

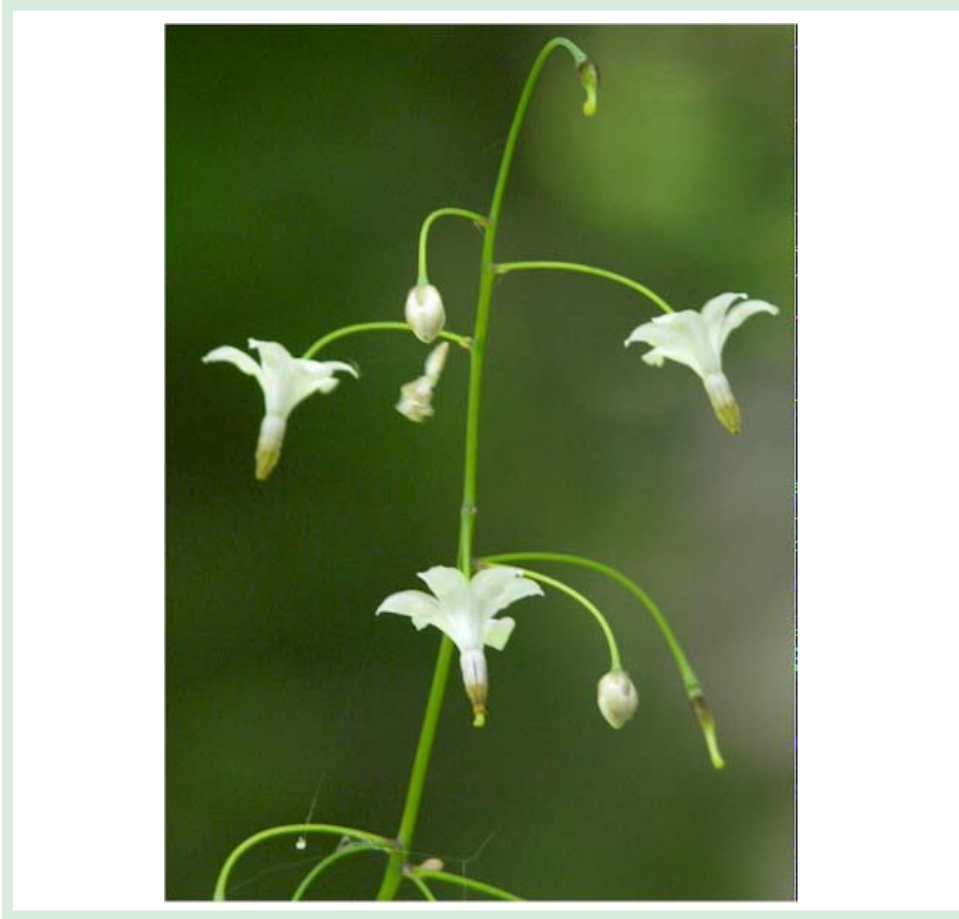


Photo by JoAnn Onstott

Name this plant!

A clue to help you on your quest for the correct answer:

I'm a shady lady of habitual confusion. I can't decide whether I'm upside down or right side up. But that's all part of my charm. Find me in the woodlands where moss likes to grow.

Send an email to nwplants@gmail.com with the correct botanical name of this plant. We'll give a 10% discount on the plant of your choice if you are the first to identify it!

Good luck!
Wally

Answer to last Journal's puzzle:

Oemleria cerasiformis
(Indian Plum or Oso Berry)

Congratulations to all who correctly answered!



To Do List

Caring for your NW Native Plant Garden

Information from Oregon State University Extension Service. See complete info at www.extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/calendar/

- 1 - Plant berry crops (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, currants, gooseberries, and other berry-producing plants).
- 2 - Fertilize caneberries (broadcast manure).
- 3 - Prune gooseberries and currants; fertilize with manure.
- 4 - Fertilize rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas with acid-type fertilizer.
- 5 - Use stored scion wood to graft fruit and ornamental trees.
- 6 - Spread compost over garden and landscape areas.



- 7 - Learn to identify the predatory insects that can help to keep aphids and other pests under control.
- 8 - Protect new plant growth from slugs. Use bait or traps. (See article on page 23 for ideas.)
- 9 - Prune spring-flowering shrubs after blossoms fade. (Or cut and enjoy indoors!)
- 10 - Plant insectary plants to attract beneficial insects to the garden.
- 11 - Do not compost grass clippings from lawns where weed-and-feed products or herbicides have been used.



Sparky's Corner

A special message from our frisky contributor

Ah, spring! New leaves are popping out on the trees and bushes. Birds are singing all day. The shining sun warms up the whole garden. Days like this bring out the frisky in everybody. Even grandma! Even old Mr. Snorters! Well, I wouldn't exactly call Mr. Snorters frisky but he's moving a lot faster than he did last time I wrote. We're having so much fun jumping from tree to tree, a race down a wire to the clump of bushes out by the greenhouses takes us right to our favorite burying place for those acorns we cached last fall.

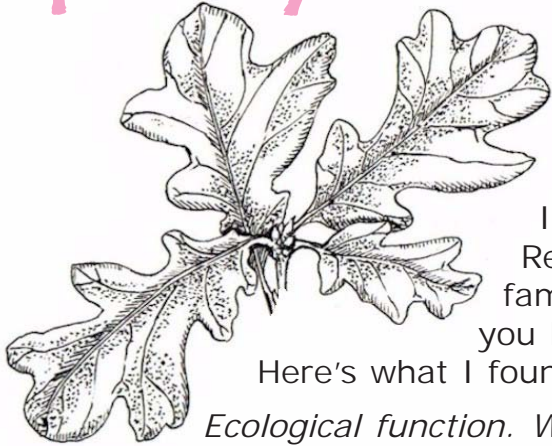


Speaking of the birds, they're starting that nesting thing again. How do they know when to do that? They hunt around for bits of junk the two-leggers leave behind or the wind blows in. Soft stuff to line the nests so the little eggs will be safe and the mama birds will be comfy while they wait for the eggs to hatch out. Man, when that happens we stay clear away from those nests. The mama birds will dive-bomb you if you get too close and the noises they make! Woooh! Worse than when my mom gets mad! They sure do protect those little babies.

That's a good thing. I like the little birds. Won't be too long until they get feathers and start making a lot of racket. They are really funny when they try to fly when they get big enough. Soon as their mama goes off to get some food they hop up on the edge of the nest and start flapping their wings. The mom keeps an eye on them though and comes right back. She makes them get down to the safety of the nest until they are really big enough to fly. Then she lets them up and shows them how. That first time they get airborne is so exciting. Everybody in the neighborhood cheers them on and the little flyer is yelling "lookit me, I can fly!" So cute.

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Sparky's Corner, continued



The two-leggers that come to the nursery every day are about as busy as bees. They're potting plants that got too big for their britches, moving plants around, setting up displays and trimming out the gardens. Spring is when the whole earth wakes up and starts moving.

I found some very interesting information on the internet the other day. Remember the study the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife did about my family in 2005? They finished this and now the whole thing is on the internet. Did you know Western gray squirrels are important for the ecological balance of the earth?

Here's what I found out:

Ecological function. Western gray squirrels and other small mammals perform important ecological functions for oak-conifer communities by dispersing the spores of hypogeous fungi (Maser et al. 1981). Hypogeous fungi are ectomycorrhizal associates of pine, oak, and Douglas-fir, and act to increase water and nutrient uptake by tree roots. Western gray squirrels consume large quantities of truffles, the belowground fruiting bodies of mycorrhizal fungi. Spores contained in truffles pass through the gut and are dispersed as squirrels defecate. These spores wash into the soil and inoculate the roots of trees. The fungi then serve as hosts to nitrogen-fixing bacteria, which convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form that is used by both the tree and the fungi. Certain hypogeous fungi are unique to oaks, and may help prepare grassland soils for invasion by oaks (A. Carey, pers. comm.). This functional relationship works to sustain the oak woodland ecosystem by maintaining a productive soil environment (Maser et al. 1981).



So all those grumpy people that complain about us should maybe give that another think. Not only are we cute and friendly, we have a big job to do!

Gotta go--see you next time.

**Your friend,
Sparky**

This is a freshly dug truffle, favorite food of all my buds. It was growing right under these wild gingers.

Almost forgot--here's where to find the whole report about us. Very interesting!

http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/diversty/soc/recovery/wgraysquirrel/wgraysquirrel_final_recovery.pdf



Picking Plants

Selecting the right native plant for your spot

Plants are picky. Those plants native to the northwestern United States are not as 'persnickety' about where they grow as long as it has a loose resemblance to their natural habitat. For the best success, a wise gardener will choose a native that grows naturally in the same kind of environment the garden has to offer.

The City of Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services has put together a list of which natives like to grow where. This is an incredibly helpful compendium of a whole bunch of northwest natives and they are all sorted by several classifications. I am sure this list took a long time and a lot of 'sweat equity' to put together.

The first classification is the kind of plant.

- Trees
- Tree-like shrubs (deciduous)
- Shrubs (evergreen)
- Ferns
- Vines
- Forbes (everything else)

Field Cluster Lily
(*Dichelostemma congestum*)
Hardy bulb commonly found in waste areas where more tender perennials fail. Plant a clump at the edge of the border and do add some extras for cutting.

Next, the light needs of each plant is noted:

- 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)



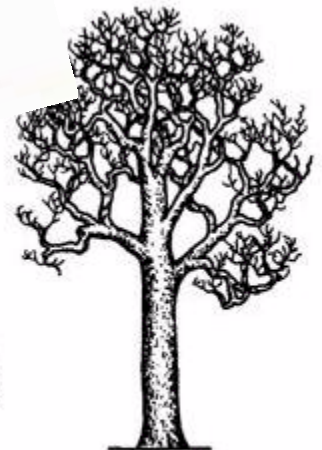
DECUMBENT



ASCENDING



SHRUB



TREE

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Picking Plants, continued

Next are the amount of water each plant needs:

SW: Seasonally Wet

PW: Perennially Wet

M: Moist

D: Dry

Finally, the type of location the plants will thrive in:

Wetland: Includes all forms of wetlands found in Portland.

Riparian: Includes the riparian areas along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, and other streams in Portland.

Forest: Refers to upland forested areas with little or no slope.

F. Slopes: Refers to steeply sloping upland forests such as the west hills and various buttes in Portland.

Thicket: Refers to edges of forests and meadows, including hedgerows and clumps of vegetation that may be found in meadows.

Grassland: Refers to open areas of forests and meadows; may include clearings in forested areas.

Rocky: Refers to rocky upland areas; may include cliffs.

There is even a column for comments which are usually not very verbose, but there is a list of publications that were used to compile this list. You can check out those sources for more information about particular plants.

So, on the next few pages is a small part of this list (we chose entries A through C). To see the whole shebang, go to their website at www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=32142&a=40732

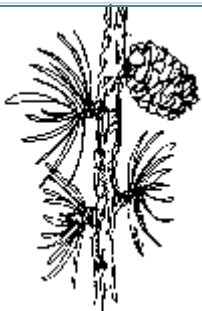


Bleeding Heart
(*Dicentra formosa*)
Photo by JoAnn
Onstott
Delicate looking
native perennial
that comes back
year after year.
Fernlike foliage is a
beautiful late
spring ground
cover.

⇒ More ⇒

Picking Plants, continued

Name	Form and Habit	Mature Size	Light Needs	Water Needs	PDX List	Setting	Comments
*Alder, Red (<i>Alnus rubra</i>)	Deciduous tree [seeds prolifically on bare soil]	Height: 80 ft - 120 ft Spread: 40 ft	Su	M, SW	Y	Riparian Forest F.Slope	Aggressive seeder and fast grower, even in poor soil. Relatively short lifespan (50 years). Provides food for birds.
Alumroot, Small-flowered (<i>Heuchera micrantha</i>)	Perennial forb	Height: 12 in - 24 in	Su, Psu	M	Y	Riparian Forest Rocky	Often found on stream banks and in rocky crevices. Numerous, very small flowers in open clusters bloom May to July.
*Ash, Oregon (<i>Fraxinus latifolia</i>)	Deciduous tree	Height: 40 ft - 80 ft Spread: 25 ft	Su	M, SW	Y	Wetland Riparian	Has winged fruit, not berries like other ashes. Often grows near streams or areas that flood.
Aster (<i>Aster species</i>)	Perennial forb	Height: 1 ft - 3 ft	Su	D, M	Y	Varies	Late summer and fall bloom. There are several native asters; some prefer meadows or open slopes; one prefers wetlands; others like moist woods. There are 4 species on PDX List.
Azalea, Western (<i>Rhododendron occidentale</i>)	Deciduous shrub	Height: 14 ft	Su, Psu	M	N	Forest	Often forms dense thickets. Most common on coast, where they grow only 2 ft - 3 ft tall.



Alpine Larch
(*Larix lyallii*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott
Deciduous conifer that is able to
withstand extreme temperatures.

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Picking Plants, continued

Name	Form and Habit	Mature Size	Light Needs	Water Needs	PDX List	Setting	Comments
Balsamroot (<i>Balsamorhiza species</i>)	Perennial forb	Height: 1 ft - 3 ft	Su	D	N	Grassland Rocky	Spectacular bloom. Most common in the Columbia hills (The Dalles, Hood River, etc).
Bleeding Heart, Western (<i>Dicentra formosa</i>)	Perennial forb spreads by rhizome	Height: 6 in - 12 in	Sh, PSu	M	Y	Wetland Forest F.Slope	Fernlike leaves. April to June bloom. Prefers rich soil. Would do well along a stream bank.
Blue-eyed Grass (<i>Sisyrinchium angustifolium</i>)	Perennial forb	Height: 8 in - 20 in	Su, PSu	M, SW	Y	Wetland Grassland	Grass-like, sharp pointed leaves. Does well on edge of streams.
*Bulrush, Small-Fruited (<i>Scirpus microcarpus</i>)	Perennial forb spreads by rhizomes	Height: 2 ft - 5 ft	Su	PW, M	Y	Wetland Forest Grassland	Grasslike plant common in wetlands and roadside ditches. Good soil-binding characteristics. Spreads fairly rapidly.
Bunchberry (<i>Cornus canadensis</i>)	Perennial forb	Height: 6 in	Sh, PSu	M	Y	Forest	Also called dwarf dogwood. Very low growing ground cover, lush with no woodiness.

Salal
(*Gaultheria shallon*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott
Highly prized for its beautiful foliage, this native is a garden must-have. Excellent as groundcover and attractive for wildlife.



Bunchberry
(*Cornus unalaschensis*)

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Picking Plants, continued

Name	Form and Habit	Mature Size	Light Needs	Water Needs	PDX List	Setting	Comments
Camas, Common (<i>Camassia quamash</i>) and (<i>Camassia leightinii</i>)	Perennial forb bulb	Height: 1 ft - 2.5 ft	Su, PSu	SW, M	Y	Wetland Grassland	Can be used in wet meadow or wetland settings. Late spring or early summer bloom. Tolerates heavy soil.
Cascara (<i>Rhamnus purshiana</i>)	Deciduous tree	Height: 30 ft - 40 ft Spread: 25 ft	Su, PSu	M, SW	Y	Riparian Forest F.Slope	Also called chittim or buckthorn. Purplish black berries are bitter but edible; they attract birds. Cannot tolerate deep shade. Seldom reach maturity. Historically, the bark has been collected and used for laxatives.
Cedar, Western Red (<i>Thuja plicata</i>)	Evergreen tree	Height: To 200 ft Spread: 30 ft	Sh, PSu	M, SW	Y	Wetland Riparian Forest	Found mostly in moist to wet soils, usually in shaded forests. Will grow in drier areas with rich soil. Probably most important tree to coastal Indians. Scale-like leaves. Bark shreds easily.
Cherry, Bitter (<i>Prunus emarginata</i>)	Deciduous tree	Height: 30 ft - 50 ft Spread: 20 ft	Su, PSu	M, SW	Y	Riparian F.Slope Thicket	Also called wild cherry. Often grows in moist woods or along streams. Can succeed in sunny, dry sites, too? Produces bright red cherries that are very bitter.
*Chokecherry, Common (<i>Prunus virginiana</i>)	Deciduous tree-like shrub	Height: 15 ft - 30 ft Spread: 15 ft	Su, PSu	D, M, SW	Y	Riparian Forest Thicket	Prefers forest edges and clearings. Purple to black drupes (like cherries) grow in elongated clusters; edible but extremely sour; excellent in syrups and jellies.



Western Azalea
(*Rhododendron occidentale*)
Photo by Professor Wilbur Bluhm
Exotic appearance, native to the northwest.

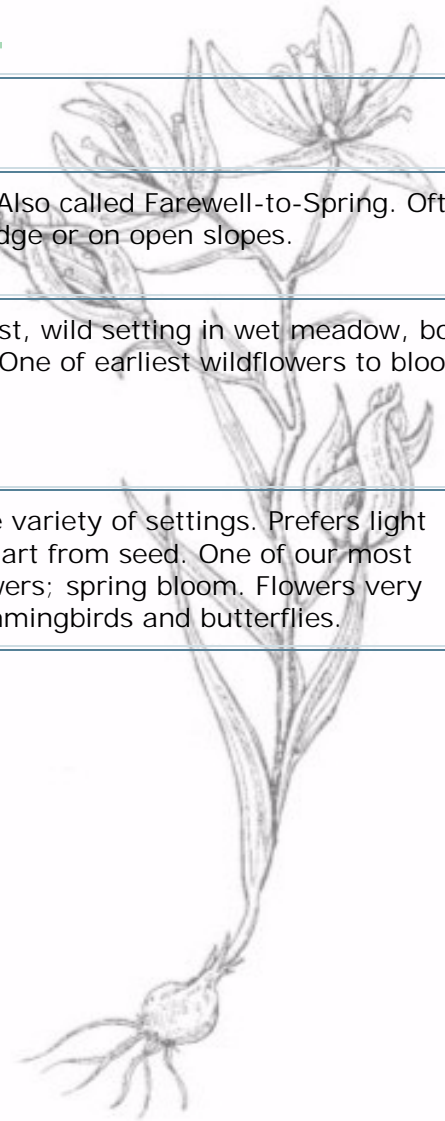
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Picking Plants, continued

Name	Form and Habit	Mature Size	Light Needs	Water Needs	PDX List	Setting	Comments
Clarkia (<i>Clarkia species</i>)	Annual forb taproot	Height: 10 in - 24 in	Su	D, M	N	Grassland Thicket	Summer bloom. Also called Farewell-to-Spring. Often found at forest edge or on open slopes.
Coltsfoot, Sweet (<i>Petasites frigidus</i>)	Perennial forb spreads from rhizomes	Height: 12 in - 24 in	Sh, PSu	W	Y	Wetland Riparian Forest Grassland	Needs large, moist, wild setting in wet meadow, bog or riparian area. One of earliest wildflowers to bloom.
Columbine, Red (<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>)	Perennial forb taproot	Height: 12 in - 18 in	Su, PSu	M	Y	Riparian Forest Thickets Grassland Rocky	Can grow in wide variety of settings. Prefers light shade. Easy to start from seed. One of our most beautiful wildflowers; spring bloom. Flowers very attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies.



Red Alder
(*Alnus rubra*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott
Attractive fast-growing tree native to the coastal regions of the northwest. Nitrogen-fixing qualities make this a good choice for reclamation.



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Picking Plants, continued

Name	Form and Habit	Mature Size	Light Needs	Water Needs	PDX List	Setting	Comments
*Cottonwood, Northern Black (<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>)	Deciduous tree does not spread	Height: 100 ft - 175 ft Spread: 25 ft - 40 ft	Su	M, SW	Y	Wetland Riparian	Fast grower in moist to saturated soils; widely used for streambank stabilization
Crabapple, Pacific (<i>Pyrus fusca</i>) or (<i>Malus fusca</i>)	Deciduous tree-like shrub	Height: 10 ft - 30 ft Spread: 35 ft	Su	M, SW	Y	Riparian Forest Thicket	Native to coastal bogs. Small clustered apples are tart but edible.
*Currant, Red-Flowering (<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>)	Deciduous shrub	Height: 3 ft - 9 ft	Su, Sh	D, M	Y	Riparian Forest F.Slope Thicket Grassland	Very attractive, erect, non-spiny shrub with red, tubular flowers that bloom early in the spring. Produces bluish, unpalatable berries that are quickly eaten by birds.
Currant, Sticky (<i>Ribes viscosissimum</i>)	Deciduous shrub	Height: 3 ft - 6 ft	Su, PSu	D, M	Y	Riparian Forest	Medium-sized, non-spiny shrub with straggly but stiff branches. Soft sticky hairs cover the leaves and flowers.

Tall Oregon Grape
(*Mahonia aquifolium*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott
Evergreen shrub thrives in shade or sun. Bright yellow flower clusters, glossy deep green foliage, dusky blue edible fruit.



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Picking Plants, continued

Some phrases used in gardening are difficult to decipher exactly. For instance, just how much sun is 'full sun?' We cannot say this is scientifically correct but in general, here are some descriptions that may help:

Full sun is at least 6 hours of direct sunlight.

Partial sun and partial shade are two of the least understood but usually, 3 to 6 hours of sun is what is meant by partial sun. Partial shade is on the low end of the scale, say 4 hours of sun or less. Usually a 'partial shade'



Heal-All or Self-Heal
(*Prunella vulgaris* var. *lanceolata*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

plant wants less afternoon sun. However, an understory plant can also be considered in a 'partial shade' location if it is planted to the north or east of the upper story.

Full shade commonly means less than 3 hours of sunlight per day. A plant that gets no direct sunlight but gets ambient sun from reflected light also fits this description.

These are general categories rather than 'garden laws.' Often a shade loving plant will do fine with spring sun and only object if its location is still sunny by the time summer comes around. Plantings under a deciduous tree or large shrub typify this situation.

If in doubt, err on the side of caution. If you find you've misjudged, try adjusting the environment by trimming back overhanging foliage to get more sun or placing a trellis to block some sun. If it turns out you've failed miserably, either relocate the plant or take a cutting and make your own start. Gardening is always an experiment.



Chickadee Realty

By Sharon Stiteler

A small Black-capped Chickadee is flitting around in a yard, hopping from branch to branch. He is studying trees, looking carefully at trunks, bark, and branches. The days are lengthening and soon it will be time to attract a female, build a nest, and raise some young. Like many other birds, he is searching for the best territory.

The chickadee inspects all the trees searching for insect larvae hidden behind bark, an important source of protein to nourish growing chicks. Under the eaves of the house he finds some old spider webs, these are a bonus. It's a sign that not too many pesticides are used here and the webs will make excellent nest building material. In a corner he finds a tangle of vines with a few leftover dried grapes. He eats one and finds that this yard has lots of potential for a good place to nest, but he still needs to look for a few other essential.

He zips over to a bird feeder full of sunflowers. He grabs a sunflower and hops to nearby branch and hammers through the shell to the nutmeat on the inside. As he is eating, a bubbling sound has caught his attention. He finishes his sunflower and follows the source of the sound.



Black-capped Chickadee
Photo by Sharon Stiteler

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Chickadee Realty, continued



Black-capped Chickadee
Photo by Sharon Stiteler



At left, Western Wild Grape
(*Vitis californica*)
This deciduous vine can climb a trellis
or form a unique groundcover. Out-
standing fall color.

On the deck he finds a small dish filled with water and a little gurgling pump. He takes a sip. He might have missed the water had he not heard the sound of the gurgle.

The chickadee's main priority after insuring that there is an abundant source of food is to make sure he has a place to build a nest. He spies a tangle of vines that would be perfect for an American Robin but a Black-capped Chickadee is a cavity nester. He needs a dead tree with an old small woodpecker hole. There are no dead trees in this yard.

He circles the house once more and there in the back he finds a pole with a little box on top. He lands on the pole and takes a closer look at the house. There is a hole, just large enough for him to fit inside, and it faces east, away from the wind. The box is about six feet high and there is a tube around the pole to keep predators like raccoons from climbing the pole. He peaks inside and the box is empty, no other bird has claimed this box. He flies off and returns with a small tuft of moss and leaves it inside the nest box. This is his calling card and this house is his territory. He flies to the top of the nearest tree to practice his "Spring Soon!" call to bring in a female. As he sings, he two other males in neighboring territory join in the chorus. Hopefully in a few weeks, a female chickadee will join him.



Chickadee favorites

Sharon's chickadee would love this table-top fountain with its cascading pools and the bottom bowl with rocks just barely reaching out of the water, perfect for perching to take a morning bath.



The nesting box at left is especially made for these little birds. The hole is just 1 1/8 inches wide. The metal plate below will prevent other birds or squirrels from enlarging the hole and moving in.

Preparing the proper habitat for chickadees and other little birds is not difficult. Give them food, shelter and water and leave out insecticides. Provide a nesting place and some protection against predators. Before long, you will find charming visitors brightening your days.



<http://www.birdwatchersgeneralstore.com/birdhouse.htm>

Peaceful partners

Diversity in the garden

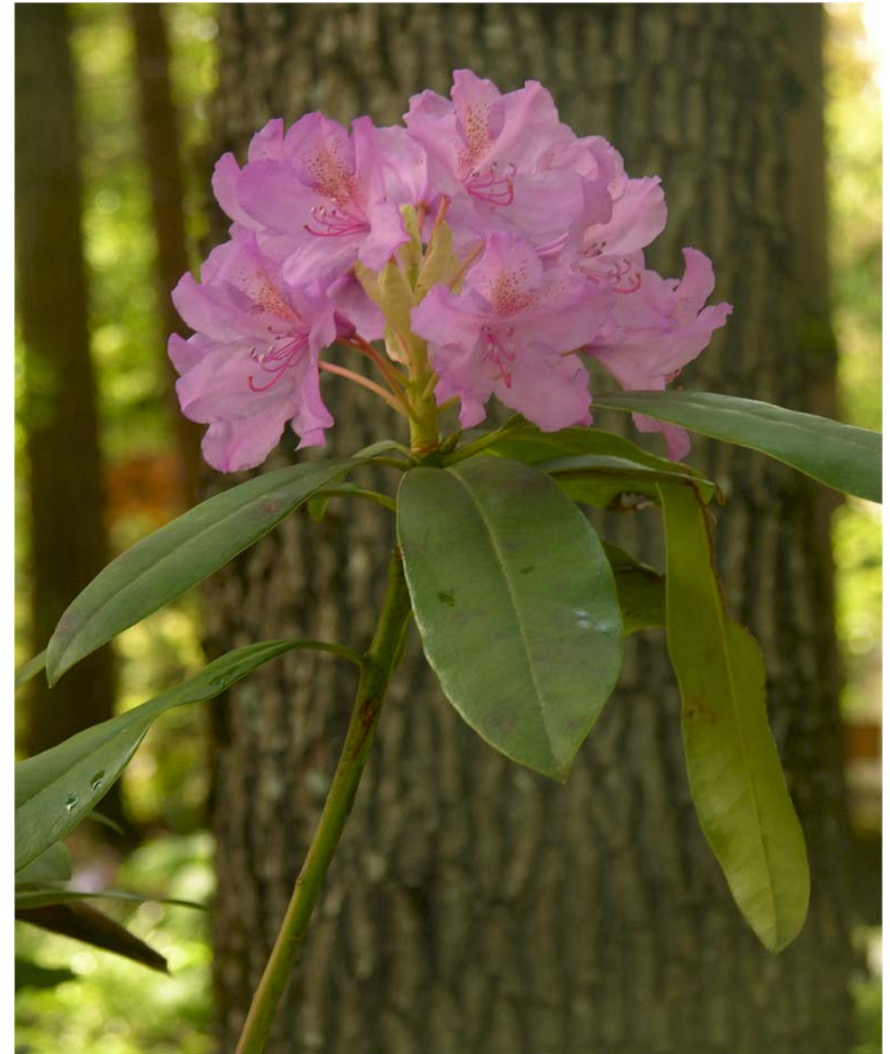
Whether your home is already landscaped or you are starting with a bare palette, wildflowers and other native plants like trees and shrubs and vines can live companionably with non-natives.

We aren't talking about aggressive alien plants here--nothing can live with them as their sole purpose in life seems to be ruling whatever world they find themselves in. These 'dictator' plants have no agreeable place in any landscape.

But well-behaved, non-invasive plants from other parts of the world can be used with local natives with good success in the same areas of the garden and each can still keep their unique character.

The trick is to partner plants that are not of the same families. For instance, if you want to put a northwest native Rhodie in your garden, let that be the only Rhodie. Don't plant one from China beside it. Why? Because those friends of all gardens, the birds and the bees, will cross-pollinate the two and each may begin to favor the other. The end result of this too-close companionship will be that each of the Rhodies will no longer be true species. However, if you're looking for some gardening adventure, this could be a good thing.

With a little care of selection, you can have native plants from many countries growing together in your landscape.



Pacific Rhodie
(*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)
Photo by JoAnn Onstott

[⇒ More ⇒](#)

Peaceful partners, continued

Another school of thought is to have separate gardens for natives and non-natives. For instance, a wildflower garden in an area separate from other flower beds. You could start this way and then collect seeds or take cuttings of wildflowers you'd like to add to your other beds and introduce them a little at a time. This approach allows you to really get acquainted with the natives before incorporating them in other areas.



Columbian Lewisia
(*Lewisia columbiæ* var. *rupicola*)
Photo by Trond Steen

In my last home I created a native plant rock garden in a corner of my yard that I decided not to water. I began by adding a lot of sandy soil to the loam that was already there. Then I planted some rocks I had collected in my travels around the state, taking care to set them well down in the dirt in ways I had seen nature do around the Mount Jefferson area.

Once the rocks were to my liking I introduced the plants. For color, I used some penstemons. In a low spot I planted some Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea*) at the back and then Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), and then Kinnikinnik (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) at the front. Here and there in small pockets I used native alliums and a few Camas. These plants, along with a good collection of Lewisia, made one of my all-time favorite gardens. Often people would stop when they saw me outside and comment on that rock garden. I did have to water the plants the first year but after that I never did a thing to it.

[⇒More⇒](#)

Peaceful partners, continued

I have used Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium* var. *canescens*) along a fence that had pale pink hybrid floribunda roses on it. The Fireweed would grow up among the roses and its spikes of flowers made a stunning contrast with the more round shaped roses. I cut the Fireweed back after the first bloom just taking off the top down to the first set of leaves. Then I had a second bloom from them. I allowed about half the seed to float to wherever it wanted and the neighbors would come by to tell me if they were lucky enough to find Fireweed in their own gardens the next year.

Whether you segregate your native and non-native plants to their own areas or let them grow together harmoniously, you will likely be pleased with the results. Your garden will be uniquely your own and if you select the plants wisely, the upkeep will gradually take less of your time with the higher percentage of native plants you add. You'll find that chemical controls can be removed from your gardening routine, watering will be done more and more by nature than you standing around with a hose in your hand. As the garden develops more naturally, birds you never noticed before will begin visiting. Butterflies will bring their erratic flight through your garden. And bad bugs will most likely disappear.



Now, since it's gardening time (or almost), take yourself to the nearest native plant nursery and begin an acquaintance you will savor for the rest of your life. Don't forget to pick up a huckleberry plant or two and maybe a couple of those delicious native strawberries for a ground cover.

Fireweed
(*Chamerion angustifolium* var. *canescens*) growing in the wild
Photo by Jennifer Rehm



Gardening Enemy #1

Slugs!

They're coming! (Or they're already here, depending on your exact location.) No slugs yet? Don't worry, if you live in Oregon you will get some slugs sooner or later. You may not see the actual varmint but you will see what may look like sparkly designs on pavement and rocks. Those are not fairy trails, they're made by our most detestable gardening enemy, the slug. Even their name is disgusting.

We've put together some creative ideas to deal with these nasties, all safe for the environment, no harm to children or pets or anything at all except the intended enemy. Fighting slugs can be a family affair and some methods are particularly fun for kids. Warning: most are not for the squeamish.

1. Get some 'hired guns.' By this we mean, attract living slug predators. These include ground beetles, garter snakes, moles, shrews, chickens, geese, and ducks. There is a snail that eats slugs in preference over vegetation. It's the Decollate snail (*Ruminia decollata*) and can be found sometimes from biological garden sources. Other slug predators are turtles, frogs lizards and salamanders. Blackbirds, crows, jays, owls, robins, seagulls, starlings and thrushes are fond of eating slugs.

2. Go on a slug hunt. You may want to wear rubber gloves or use long tweezers (old kitchen tongs are good). Fill a screw-top jar with soapy water for a collection container. Pick up the slugs and drop them in the jar. Be sure to screw the top down tight. Some slugs are strong enough to push off the lid of a yogurt container.



This nasty slug would love to get his choppers on the trillium. Try some of these methods to keep your trilliums safe.

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Gardening Enemy #1, continued

3. Traps. There are many kinds of traps you can make at home.

Beer trap: A plastic butter tub is best for this and you'll need the lid. Cut some 1 inch holes in the upper half of the container. Bury it in the ground up to the holes. Fill with beer. Put on the lid to keep out the rain. The slugs will climb in and drown. Give it extra punch by adding a dash of yeast (the kind for baking) which makes it even more attractive to the slugs. Clean it out every 2-3 days, not more often because oddly enough the dead slugs attract live ones. Go figure. If you don't want to use beer, mix 2 tablespoons of flour, 1/2 teaspoon yeast and 1 teaspoon of sugar with 2 cups warm water. Works just as well as the beer.

Slug stomping trap: Get two boards and a few small rocks. Put down one board, sprinkle the rocks on and lay the other board on top. Each morning, take out the stones and stomp on the top board which will squish the slugs in between the boards. Then put the rocks back in between the boards. Again, the smashed slugs will attract others.

Lures: lay down grapefruit or melon rinds, two-gallon flower pots or plastic leaf bags. First thing each morning, pick off the slugs and destroy them. Either smash them, drown in soapy water or whatever suits your sensibilities.

Slug hotel: fancier than the butter tub, this one uses a n empty plastic soda bottle. Cut the bottle just before it starts to taper towards the neck. Put the neck piece inside the bottom piece, neck first. Tape the two together with duct tape. Fill the bottle half full with beer or apple cider and bury it sideways in the garden so that the entrance is level with the ground. When it gets full, take off the top and empty into garbage or compost bin. Put the top back, tape it, refill and bury again. I call mine Hotel California after the Three Dog Night's song. "You can come if you want to, but you can never leave."



The Oregon Grape in the background is not a favorite of slugs but the Stellar's Jay loves the fruit. This native shrub fights slugs two ways: Slugs don't like to eat them and they bring on a great slug predator.

⇒ More ⇒

Gardening Enemy #1, continued

4. Keep away. A strip of copper laid around a slug-attracting plant will hold slugs at bay. When they start to slime over it they get a little electric shock. Crushed egg shells are said to deter slugs. Anything else you can think of that has sharp edges will also probably make the slugs detour around it. Lava rock works for this. Pieces of hardware cloth or aluminum screening stuck in the ground with the pointy parts up are said to be uncomfortable for slugs to crawl on. Builders sand sprinkled around the plants may work.

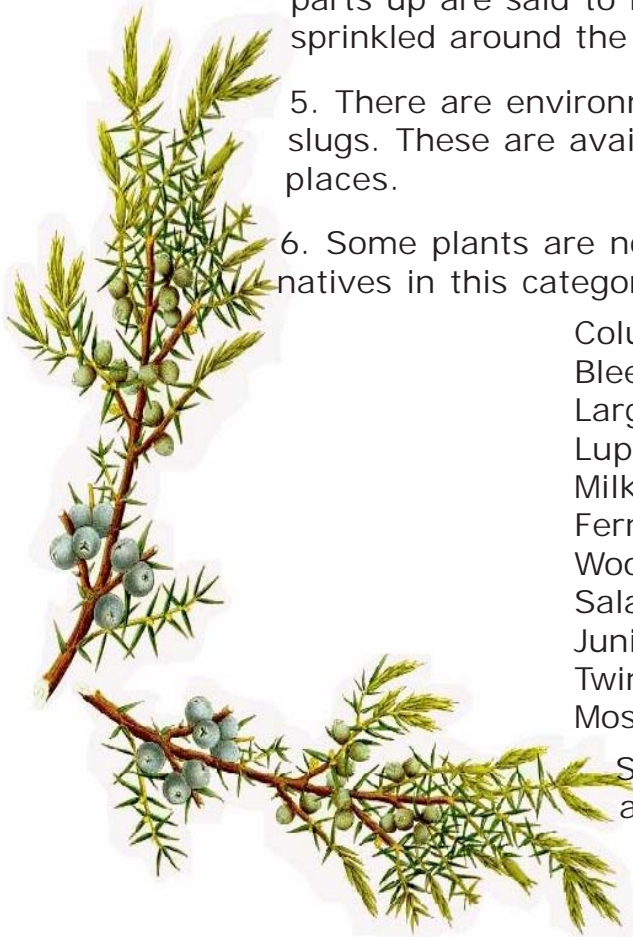
5. There are environmentally safe slug baits that won't harm anything except slugs. These are available at savvy gardening centers or mail order garden supply places.

6. Some plants are not slug-friendly. Anything with thorns for instance. Also, these natives in this category are:

Columbine (Aquilegia)
Bleeding Heart (Dicentra formosa)
Large-Leaf Avens (Geum macrophyllum)
Lupine
Milkweed
Ferns
Wood Sorrel (Oxalis oreganum)
Salal (Gaultheria shallon)
Juniper
Twinflower (Linnaea borealis)
Most conifers

Slime remover: If you get slug slime on your hands or anything else, pour on a little cheap white vinegar and rinse off with lukewarm water.

Two more natives that are not on the slug menu. Left, Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*). Right, Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*)





Spring Pools

by Robert Lee Frost

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.
The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods —
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.



Useful Plant Databases on the Web

Here is a good collection of web data bases that will be useful to professional growers and all native plant gardeners. This list is from a larger list compiled by Lawyer Nursery in 2002 and published in one of their flyers. I wish to thank them for this public service.

Wally

American Bonsai Society

http://www.absbonsai.org/abs_home.html

Birdchick

<http://www.birdchick.com/>

Hundreds of photos of birds, bees, butterflies and other friendlies. Sharon Stiteler shares the joys of birding as well as insights on rabbits.

Bonsai web

<http://www.bonsaiweb.com>

Portal of links to educate about the art of bonsai.

CalPhotos

<http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/photos/>

Over 33,000 plant images from the University of California, Berkley

Cornell University online grafting course

<http://instruct1.cit.cornell.edu/courses/hort494/graftage/hort494.index.html>

Fire effects on plant species

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/>

USDA, Forest Service site.



Western Trillium
(Trillium ovatum)
Photo by Jennifer Rehm

⇒ More ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, Continued

Flora of North America Web Site

<http://hua.huh.harvard.edu/FNA/>

Taxonomic relationships, distributions, and morphological characteristics of all plants native and naturalized found in North America.

Forest Types of the United States

<http://forestry.about.com/library/tree/bltypdex.htm>

Maps of the most common forest types.

Forestry index

<http://forestryindex.net/>

Links to news & info on the forestry industry.

Growit.com Rooting Database

<http://www.growit.com/Know/Rooting.htm>

"Extensive information on rooting cuttings of woody plants, organized by botanical name. Developed for commercial growers."

ModernBackyard

<http://www.modernbackyard.com>

Landscape architecture provides exceptional, affordable landscape design online.

The Native Plant Network

<http://nativeplants.for.uidaho.edu/network/>

Information on how to propagate native plants of North America.



Giant Purple Trillium
(*Trillium kurabayashii*)
Photo by Jennifer Rehm

⇒ More ⇒

Useful Plant Databases on the Web, Continued

Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

<http://www.portlandonline.com/bes/index.cfm?c=29323>
Oregon's Clean River Agency website full of wonderful information about caring for our earth. Download their Native Plant Poster, plant list and brochure on removing invasive plants at

River Corridor and Wetland Restoration

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/>
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) site

Soils

<http://homepages.which.net/~fred.moor/soil/links/10102.htm>
A website about soil fertility, chemistry, and pH with many interesting links.

Soil Science Society of America

<http://www.soils.org/>
Website for soil science professionals. Offers information and links.

Woody Plant Seed Manual

<http://www.wpsm.net/>
Manual by the US Forest Service covering seed biology, genetic Improvement of forest trees, seed testing, certification of tree seeds and other woody plant materials, and nursery practices.



Sessile Trillium
(*Trillium parviflorum*)
Photo by Jennifer Rehm



This & That

Notes from Jennifer

It feels just like spring these last few days though it is not until March 20 that the season officially starts this year. Between the sunshine and the birds and the flowers beginning to bloom, my inside self is having a hard time realizing it's still a bit chilly outside, especially in the mornings.

My canine and feline friends (I have two of each) seem to be champing at the bit for springtime also. They are showing signs of dementia already--they are extremely playful, even more so than usual. They chase each other around and throw toys for one another to catch. The cats are especially crazy. Dogs generally have a target when they are racing about but the cats run around for no apparent reason. Sometimes they sit and stare at the ceiling and then jump as high as they can towards whatever it is they are imagining they see. I must say, having four legs and no responsibilities must be delightful fun. Perhaps it would do human being some good to take a day once in a while and emulate these furry guys.

The willows are blooming all down the valley. I spotted one Thursday morning that had deep maroon stems and little grey catkins. I'd intended to take it's photo on Friday when I came back north but the little catkins had burst into white fluffs already. A lesson for me: when I see something camera-worthy, take a few minutes to capture the shot.

This same tenet is true of all kinds of situations. For instance, at thrift stores and rummage sales. Bob Raugh who used to be on an antique show on OPB had a rule. He said if you find something while antiqueing that you truly love and that you can afford, buy it. Don't buy things just because you think they are valuable now or will be some day.

I guess the real life lesson is to seize the moment. Not just carpe diem (seize the day) but carpe momento!



The eclipse we had a short while ago. This is about halfway through it. I could see it much better with the naked eye than I caught with my camera. The hills look nice though! I need more practice.

[⇒More⇒](#)

This & That, continued



February 17 was Random Acts of Kindness Day, one of my favorites. I have a personal dedication to try to do something good for someone every day. I like to do this anonymously if possible. I believe in 'paying it forward.' If you do something kind, the person who receives this will naturally do something nice for someone else. And this snowballs to make the world a better place, one tiny step at a time. I think it's magical.

Try this out for yourself. Hold a door for someone. When you're in traffic, let someone from a side street pull in front of you or if they're trying to turn across the street, stop and let them through. If you have a little extra money, pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru espresso line. Keep your eyes open for an opportunity to do some little thing to make someone's day brighter.

One thing we gardeners can do is share plants or flowers with friends, co-workers and neighbors. It costs us nothing and could be the best thing that happens to the recipient. Gardening is a naturally giving way to spend time. Each tree we plant makes a little shade, a little shelter for birds, a little beauty for the garden. When we compost, we give back enrichment that the earth spent making the plants in the first place. It's all good and it is so good for us. Even if your garden is a gallon pot on the porch, tending it will bring you joy.

Like mother, like son.
This little lamb and his mother stood
and watched me as I took their photo
one recent morning.



NOTICE: NURSERY IS CLOSED

In November 2010,
Wallace W Hansen NW Native Plants
Native Plant Nursery and Gardens
closed permanently.

Many thanks to all our gardening friends
for your interest in the native plants of
the Pacific northwest. It has been our
pleasure to serve you.

www.nwplants.com

Our website, www.nwplants.com, is
no longer commercial. Our goal is to
continue Wally's legacy of generating
interest, even passion, in the
magnificent native plants of the
Pacific Northwest through
information and illustration.

Good luck! Good gardening!



Red-flowering Currant
(*Ribes sanguineum*)

Photo by JoAnn Onstott