



## Invasive Plants Found in the Puget Sound Region

Seattle Urban Nature (SUN) is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating tools to empower stewards for healthy urban ecosystems. SUN assists community groups, government, non-profit organizations, and private citizens in their efforts to survey, map, restore, and maintain urban forests in the Puget Sound region. To support SUN or for more information, please visit [www.seattleurbannature.org](http://www.seattleurbannature.org).

**English ivy** (*Hedera helix*) is one of the most well-known invasive plants in our urban forests. This vine can suffocate trees by climbing into the canopy. It also forms a dense ground cover which impedes all other plants from growing, creating an "ivy desert." English ivy is the second most invasive plant affecting Seattle's public lands.



*English ivy*

**Wild clematis** (*Clematis vitalba*) is a climbing vine which can grow into the canopy of trees forming a dense mat. Its seeds are spread by wind and water, and it can root from stem nodes to produce new plants. It is among the top five most invasive plants affecting Seattle's public lands.



*Wild clematis*

**Yellow archangel** (*Lamium galeobdolon*) is a popular horticultural groundcover which grows in low-light conditions in our urban forests. A relatively new threat, this plant can form extensive colonies which exclude all other plants.



*Yellow archangel*

**Bittersweet nightshade** (*Solanum dulcamara*) is a poisonous vine which grows in wet areas in our urban forests. It is commonly grown as an ornamental plant in gardens. Much like English ivy, this vine can form dense mats on the ground, excluding other native plants and reducing the quality of wildlife habitat for native animals and birds.



*Bittersweet nightshade leaves and berries*

**Hedge false bindweed** (*Calystegia sepium*) and **Shortstalk false bindweed** (*C. silvatica*) are climbing vines which form a thick ground cover and climb into the canopy of woody plants. These plants spread by rhizomes and can sprout from fragments left in the soil. The vigorous growth of the plants can smother both herbaceous and woody plant species.



*Hedge false bindweed*

**Knotweed** (*Polygonum spp.*) Several species of knotweeds (Japanese, Bohemian, Himalayan) are posing a serious threat to wetland and riparian areas in King County. This escaped ornamental plant spreads by rhizomes and seeds. Knotweed forms thickets along stream banks that clog waterways and displace native plants. It is one of the top ten invasive plants affecting Seattle's parks and open spaces.



*Knotweed*

Photos courtesy of Nelson Salisbury

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# Native Plants for Landscaping

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**Coastal strawberry** (*Fragaria chiloensis*) is a hearty evergreen groundcover which spreads readily. It can grow in full sun. The small strawberries are delicious, providing you get them before the squirrels do.



Coastal strawberry



**Western trillium** (*Trillium ovatum*) is a small perennial plant with striking white flowers that bloom in early spring. This plant's name comes from the Latin word *trillium*, meaning "in 3s," referring to the plant's leaves, petals, sepals, and stigmas. It grows best in moist to wet areas.



Western trillium



**False lily of the valley** (*Maianthemum dilatatum*) emerges in the spring and has delicate white flowers. This spreading groundcover prefers partial shade and moist soil. The fruit is a greenish-brown, speckled berry which grows in late summer.



False lily of the valley



**Pacific bleeding heart** (*Dicentra formosa*) is a popular Northwest native that tends to grow in moist soils. It has fern-like leaves and pinkish to purple, heart-shaped flowers that droop quite dramatically. This plant is an excellent addition to any native plant garden.



Pacific bleeding heart



**Sword fern** (*Polystichum munitum*) is an evergreen plant commonly seen throughout Puget Sound forests. It typically prefers moist soil and is shade-tolerant. Native Americans used the large fronds of the fern as a protective layer in traditional pit ovens, and often as flooring or bedding.



Sword fern



**Western trumpet honeysuckle** (*Lonicera ciliosa*) is a climbing vine that is a perfect alternative to the invasive Wild clematis. Its orange to yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers are wonderfully fragrant and attractive to hummingbirds.



Western trumpet honeysuckle

Photos courtesy of Nelson Salisbury

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## Invasive Shrubs Found in the Puget Sound Region

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**Himalayan blackberry** (*Rubus discolor*) and **Evergreen blackberry** (*Rubus laciniatus*) form thick stands of impenetrable shrubs which exclude all other plants. In 2000, SUN's citywide survey showed Himalayan blackberry to be the most invasive plant in Seattle's public lands. These shrubs produce tasty berries which are spread by birds all over the Pacific Northwest.



Himalayan blackberry leaves (above) and berries (right)



Evergreen blackberry leaves

**Scotch broom** (*Cytisus scoparius*) is an invasive plant commonly found in disturbed areas and along roadsides. It is one of the top five invasive plants found in Seattle's public lands. A member of the pea family, the seedpods eject seeds up to 20 feet away.



Scotch broom

**Spurge laurel** (*Daphne laureola*) is an evergreen horticultural shrub introduced from Eurasia. Spurge laurel can establish in the shady forest understory where it competes with native vegetation. This shrub is spread by birds who eat the berries.



Spurge laurel leaves and berries

**Butterfly bush** (*Buddleja davidii*) is a very popular garden plant which has escaped into natural areas. This shrub is common along roadsides and disturbed areas. It is one of the most recent additions to the King County Noxious Weed List. The seeds are spread by wind, birds, animals and people who brush up against the plant.



Butterfly bush

**Cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster spp.*) is a popular landscaping shrub which grows in low-light conditions in our forests. It produces berries in the winter and attracts birds which disperse the seeds. These plants have the potential to displace native shrubs.



Cotoneaster

Photos courtesy of Nelson Salisbury

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## Native Shrubs for Landscaping

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**Vine maple** (*Acer circinatum*) is a shrub or small tree which grows to approximately 25 feet tall. Its beautiful, lobed leaves turn yellow to bright red in the fall. It can grow in shade or full sun.



Vine maple



**Red flowering currant** (*Ribes sanguineum*) is a shrub that can grow up to 10 feet tall. It produces beautiful pink flowers in the spring. These flowers provide nectar for hummingbirds and butterflies.



Red flowering currant



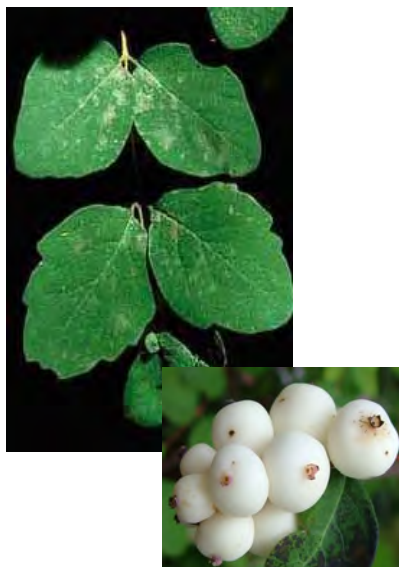
**Salal** (*Gaultheria shallon*) is a very common plant found in our forests. It produces small grape-like berries in the fall which were gathered by Native Americans. Salal makes a beautiful evergreen shrub in the garden that can grow up to 15 feet tall.



Salal



**Snowberry** (*Symphoricarpos albus*) is a small to medium shrub capable of growing in a wide variety of conditions. It produces white berries in the fall which last throughout most of the winter.



Snowberry leaves and berries



**Mock orange** (*Philadelphus lewisii*) is a small to medium shrub that is great for native plant gardens due to its ability to grow in a wide variety of habitats. Its white, fragrant flowers and leaves can be crushed into a lather, and were once used by Native Americans as a form of soap.



Mock orange



**Evergreen huckleberry** (*Vaccinium ovatum*) is an evergreen shrub commonly found in conifer forests. It produces pink, bell-shaped flowers and delicious purplish-black berries that go well in a pancake breakfast.



Evergreen huckleberry

Photos courtesy of Nelson Salisbury

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## Invasive Trees Found in the Puget Sound Region

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**Cherry laurel** (*Prunus laurocerasus*) is an evergreen tree and is among the most prevalent invasive species in Seattle's parks and open spaces. This popular garden species grows and reproduces in the forest environment, and competes with native species. The seeds are dispersed by birds who eat the berries.



Cherry laurel

**English holly** (*Ilex aquifolium*) is another invasive evergreen plant dispersed by birds. This traditional landscape plant is one of the most common invasive species found in Seattle's urban forests and can be spread from miles away.



English holly

**Portugal laurel** (*Prunus lusitanica*), an evergreen invasive tree, is often overlooked as a threat to our urban forests. This plant is able to reproduce in the forest understory in low light conditions. It competes with and displaces native species when established. It is spread by birds who eat the berries.



Portugal laurel

**Horse chestnut** (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) is another commonly planted European horticultural plant. This deciduous tree has five-lobed leaves and attractive flowers. The nuts are spread to natural areas by birds and animals. Once established, it competes with native vegetation for space, light and nutrients.



Horse chestnut

**European mountain ash** (*Sorbus aucuparia*) is a deciduous horticultural tree with clusters of orange-red berries that attract birds. This tree is frequently found in our urban forests, courtesy of birds dropping seeds.



European mountain ash

**European hawthorn or one-seed hawthorn** (*Crataegus monogyna*) is a deciduous tree which is capable of reproducing in forest conditions. It is a common invasive species found in Seattle's forests and often creates dense thickets in disturbed areas. It is spread by birds who eat the clusters of red berries produced in the fall. European hawthorn is a popular horticultural plant.



European hawthorn


Photos courtesy of Nelson Salisbury

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 **Western red cedar** (*Thuja plicata*) is a beautiful evergreen conifer tree that can grow up to 200 feet tall. It is usually found in moist soils and tends to prefer the shade. This tree is an important part of the culture of the Native Americans in this region, and is held in the highest regard for its healing and spiritual powers.




Western red cedar

 **Bitter cherry** (*Prunus emarginata*) is a small tree that can reach a height of about 45 feet. It produces white to pinkish flowers that will add a splash of color to any native plant garden. Its bright red cherries make this tree striking, but are quite bitter in flavor. Bitter cherry can grow in full sun.




Bitter cherry

 **Douglas fir** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) is a large evergreen conifer that can grow over 200 feet tall. It is well-adapted for dry or moist soil, and can grow in full-sun. It has thick, ridged bark that is rough and dark brown. Under natural conditions, this tree can live over 1000 years!




Douglas fir

 **Pacific madrone** (*Arbutus menziesii*) is a unique evergreen tree with shiny green leaves and orange-red berries. Its most distinct feature is the orange to brownish bark that peels off in large strips revealing smooth green wood. This tree is found in dry, sunny, and well-drained sites, and is often associated with Douglas fir trees.





Pacific madrone leaves, berries & bark

 **Western hemlock** (*Tsuga heterophylla*) is an elegant evergreen conifer tree found in the Pacific Northwest. It has down sweeping branches, feathery needles, and reddish-brown bark. It can grow in moist to wet soils, and is extremely shade-tolerant. With a high tannin content in the bark, Native Americans used it as a tanning agent.



Western hemlock

  **Cascara** (*Rhamnus purshiana*) is a small tree that can grow up to 30 feet tall. It has egg-shaped leaves and produces blue to black berries that are edible but not so tasty. Its silver-gray bark was used as a strong laxative by Native Americans in the region. Cascara can grow in dry to wet soil, and is often found alongside vine maples.



Cascara

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