

Snohomish Conservation District's

GUIDE TO NATIVE PLANTS FOR BANK STABILIZATION

Bare patches of soil, exposed rocks and roots, and crumbling banks are all signs of soil erosion. While erosion is a process that occurs naturally over time, our actions can accelerate it, or help slow it down. By planting a mixture of the native trees and shrubs listed below, you can help anchor and hold soil in place while also creating habitat, protecting water quality, and building soil health.

Deciduous Trees					
Big leaf maple *	Acer macrophyllum	100 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Black cottonwood *^	Populus balsamifera	160 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Cascara	Rhamnus purshiana	15-30 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	SS, ST
Red alder *^	Alnus rubra	120 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Pacific willow	Salix lucida	40 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Scouler's willow	Salix scouleriana	20 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST

Though evergreens grow slowly, they live longer, provide long-term soil stabilization, and filter more water than deciduous trees. Their foliage also provides year-round coverage, which reduces erosion by causing rain to slowly trickle through branches rather than hitting the ground directly. Since evergreens take longer to establish, it's best to avoid placing them in active erosion zones and to mix in some of the other plants listed here.

Evergreen Trees					
Douglas fir *	Pseudotsuga menziesii	250 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Grand fir *	Abies grandis	250 ft	☹️	☁️☁️	ST
Shore pine *	Pinus contorta var. contorta	50 ft	☹️	☁️☀️	ST
Western hemlock *	Tsuga heterophylla	225 ft	☹️	☁️☁️	ST
Western red cedar*	Thuja plicata	200 ft	☹️	☁️☁️	ST

☹️ = dry ☹️ = moist ☹️ = wet ☁️ = shade ☁️☀️ = part shade ☀️ = sun

KEY

ST = slope stabilization SS = surface soil stabilization

^ = appropriate for some conditions * = consult a geotechnical professional before planting

Below are some great shrubs that can help prevent or slow erosion!

Shrubs with spreading foliage and an intricate root system offer a lot of support to stream banks and slopes. Integrating a diversity of trees, shrubs, and groundcovers will help establish different types of root systems that can provide soil stability.

Groundcovers					
Dull Oregon grape	Mahonia nervosa	3 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS
Kinnikinnick	Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	1 ft	☹	☁☀☀	SS
Native strawberry species	Fragaria spp.	1 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Salal	Gaultheria shallon	6 ft	☹☹	☁☁☀	SS
Sword fern	Polystichum munitum	5 ft	☹☹	☁☁☀	SS
Tall Oregon grape	M. aquifolium	8 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS, ST

Shrubs					
Beaked filbert/Hazelnut	Corylus cornuta	20 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS, ST
Black twinberry	Lonicera involucrata	9 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS, ST
Douglas spirea	Spiraea douglasii	6 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Evergreen huckleberry	Vaccinium ovatum	6 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS
Nootka rose	Rosa nutkana	3-8 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Oceanspray	Holodiscus discolor	10 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Osoberry	Oemleria cerasiformis	10 ft	☹	☁☀	SS
Pacific ninebark	Physocarpus capitatus	6-15 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS, ST
Red flowering currant	Ribes sanguineum	5-10 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Red-osier dogwood	Cornus stolonifera	15 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS, ST
Salmonberry	Rubus spectabilis	12 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS
Serviceberry	Amelanchier alnifolia	12 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS
Snowberry	Symphoricarpos albus	5 ft	☹☹	☁☀	SS, ST
Vine Maple	Acer circinatum	25 ft	☹☹	☁☀☀	SS, ST

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