

Hello and Welcome!

Celebrate the native plants that shape the beauty of the Pacific Northwest... and Kruckeberg Botanic Garden!

Welcome to Kruckeberg's **Native Beauty Collection Exhibit!** These garden signs highlights plants native to the Pacific Northwest and the ornamental roles they play in our gardens. From forest canopies to garden floors, these native and beautiful species support pollinators, nature, and people while reflecting the changing of the seasons and the deep cultural connections to this land.



As you explore, look closely.

Notice which plants are blooming, what colors are vibrant in the gardens, and how each aspect of the ecosystem is connected.

Each sign in this collection highlights a different part of the story!

VINE MAPLE

(Acer circinatum)

A Tree Shaped by the Forest... and by People

Graceful and adaptable, **Vine Maples** grow beneath the towering trees of Pacific Northwest forests. Its arching branches bend, twist, and sometimes root where they touch the ground, creating living pathways through shaded woodlands.

For generations, Indigenous communities (including the **Quinault** people) have used vine maple's flexible wood to make tools, snowshoe frames, and fishing equipment.

Where, oh Where Does It Grow?

Vine maple thrives in moist, shaded forests of western Washington and Oregon. When walking along the **Discovery Loop**, look for:

- Rounded leaves with 7–9 shallow lobes
- Smooth gray bark and small reddish flowers in Spring
- Winged seeds (*samaras*) in late the Summer
- Brilliant red, orange, or gold leaves in Fall

Unlike many maples, vine maple grows in looping, arching stems... sometimes rooting to form new growth.

Vine Maple



Seasons of Vine Maple

Spring

- Reddish flowers bloom before leaves fully emerge

Summer

- Lush green leaves create soft forest cover

Fall

- Leaves bloom in reds, oranges, and golds (*see picture to the left*)

Winter

- Barren, but elegant branching reveals its sculptural form

Natively Beautiful Fact:

Vine Maple's flexible wood make it very important to Indigenous communities, such as the Quinault people, for tools, snowshoe frames, and fishing equipment. Their strength and flexibility reflect generations of ecological knowledge!

WHITE ALDER

(*Alnus rhombifolia*)

A Tree That Builds the Forest from the Ground Up

Along rivers and streams, **White Alder** does more than grow... they transforms the land around it! Often one of the first trees to take root in disturbed or open areas, it helps prepare the way for entire plant communities to follow.

In the layered forests of the **Pacific Northwest**, White Alder plays a vital role from the soil beneath your feet to the life along the water's edge.

Where, oh Where Does It Grow?

White Alder thrives in moist soils throughout the **Pacific Northwest**, especially in **lowland and valley regions**. You can look for it by identifying:

- Oval or diamond-shaped leaves with fine toothed edges
- Smooth, light gray bark
- Small, cone-like woody seed structures which remain year-round
- Long, hanging *catkins* (flowers) in late winter to early spring

In Washington, it is a key part of *riparian* (streamside) ecosystems. And unlike other alders, its leaves are typically not sticky, and its bark stays pale as it matures.

White Alder



Seasons of White Alder

Spring-Summer

- Dense green leaves develops (see *picture to the left*)

Fall

- Leaves drop, enriching the soil

Late Winter-Early Spring

- Catkins release pollen before leaves emerge

Year-round

- Woody cones remain visible on branches

Natively Beautiful Fact:

White Alder connects multiple layers of the ecosystem: from roots that enrich the soil to branches that shelter nature. By improving the ground it grows in, it helps other plants take root, shaping the forest from the bottom up.

RED-OSIER DOGWOOD

Cornus sericea (syn. *Cornus stolonifera*)



A Shrub That Stands Out in Every Season

Along streams and wetlands, **Red-Osier Dogwood** brings color and life to the landscape all year long. From spring flowers to winter's vivid red stems, it offers a changing display that reflects the rhythms of the Pacific Northwest.



Look for it:

- Along streams and riverbanks
- In wetlands and flood plains
- At the edges where land meets water

The vivid red bark makes it easy to recognize... even from a distance!

How to Identify It

- Bright red stems, especially striking in winter
- Opposite, oval-shaped leaves with smooth edges
- Clusters of small white flowers in late spring
- White to blueish berries in summer
- Spreads through underground stems, forming dense thickets



Seasons of the Landscape

Red-osier dogwood supports life across the seasons:

- Flowers attract pollinators like bees and butterflies
- Berries provide food for birds and small mammals
- Dense growth offers nesting and shelter to wildlife
- Roots stabilize stream banks and reduce erosion

It plays an important role in keeping riparian ecosystems healthy and resilient.

Seasons of the Dogwood

Spring

- Clusters of white flowers bloom

Summer

- Berries develop, feeding wildlife

Fall

- Leaves turn deep-red and purple

Winter

- Bright red stems remain vibrant against the landscape

Natively Beautiful Fact:

This shrub is a living calendar! It marks time through color, growth, and change. As the seasons shift, red-osier dogwood reveals how plants can adapt and continue to support life, even in colder, winter months.

What signs of the season can you find here in Kruckeberg?

WHITE-LILAC BUCKBRUSH

(*Ceanothus cuneatus*)



A Shrub That Helps the Land Begin Again

In sunny, open landscapes, the **White Lilac–Buckbrush** bursts into bloom with clusters of soft, fragrant flowers, but beyond its beauty, this plant plays an important role in how ecosystems recover and thrive.

Across **Kruckeberg gardens**, it connects soil, pollinators, and place, helping shape the garden we see today!

Look for it:

- On dry slopes and open woodlands
- Along coastal bluffs
- In areas recovering after disturbances, such as fire

How to Identify It

- Clusters of small, fragrant white (sometimes blue) flowers
- Blue-green to dark green leaves, often glossy in texture
- Rounded, shrubby growth structure
- Small seed capsules that may burst open when mature



Its dense flower clusters give it a lilac-like appearance!



Plants, People, and Places

Ceanothus are part of a larger story on how landscapes change and recover.

By improving the soil and supporting pollinators, it helps shape the environments that people and wildlife depend on, contributing to the identity of the Pacific Northwest!

Natively Beautiful Fact:

After disturbance, Ceanothus are often one of the first plants to return, helping prepare the soil for others to grow.

Working quietly underground with bacteria in its roots, Ceanothus adds nutrients back into the soil, creating space for other plants to thrive.

What new life might follow where this shrub takes root?

Seasons of White Lilac–Buckbrush

Spring-Early Summer

- Masses of flowers bloom

Summer

- Seeds develop and disperse

Fall-Winter

- Evergreen or semi-evergreen leaves persist (depending on species)

When in bloom, Ceanothus can transform entire hillsides into a mass of white or blue.

RED COLUMBINE

(Aquilegia formosa)

Beauty Designed to Support Life

With its vibrant red and yellow flowers, **Red Columbine** brings bursts of color to forests and rocky slopes. But its beauty is more than visual, it's a signal.

Each flower is shaped to attract specific pollinators, creating a relationship where both plant and animal depend on one another to survive.

Where, oh Where Does It Grow?

Red Columbines grow across the Pacific Northwest in habitats, such as forest edges, open woodlands, rocky slopes, or moist soils and streams. When walking along the **Discovery Loop**, look for:

- Red and yellow flowers with long, backward-pointing spurs
- Delicate, rounded leaves
- Slender stems that sway in the breeze
- Flowers that hang downward, resembling a lantern-like shape

Its unique flower shape is closely tied to how it is pollinated. It thrives in partial shade but can also grow in sunnier spots with enough moisture.

Red Columbine



Seasons of Red Columbine

Spring-Early Summer

- Bright flowers bloom (see picture to the left)

Summer

- Seed pods develop and scatter

Fall-Winter

- Above-ground growth dies back, but below-ground growth continues to thrive

Red Columbine is one of the earlier blooming wildflowers, helping to kickstart the pollinator season.

Take a Closer Look!

Watch the flowers for a moment. Do you see any visitors?

Hummingbirds, bees, or butterflies?

How do they move? Where do they land?

Even a few quiet seconds can reveal a network of relationships happening all around you!

CAMAS

(*Camassia quamash*)

A Meadow Shaped by People and Time

In spring, **Camas** transforms open fields into vibrant blue landscapes! But these meadows are more than seasonal beauty, they are places shaped by generations of care, knowledge, and connection to the land.

For many **Indigenous** communities, Camas has long been an essential part of both culture and survival.

Where, oh Where Does It Grow?

Camas thrives in open meadows, prairies, and seasonally wet fields across the Pacific Northwest. You can look for it by identifying:

- Tall stalks topped with star-shaped blue to violet flowers
- Grass-like leaves that sprout from the bottom
- Bulb-forming plants growing underground
- Flowers bloom in order from bottom to top

They grows in soils that are wet in the springtime and dry by summer. During peak bloom, Camas can cover entire meadows in waves of blue flowers.

Camas



Seasons of Camas

Spring

- Leaves emerge, followed by tall flower stalks

Late Spring-Early Summer

- Blooming flowers create fields of blue

Summer

- Seeds develop; above-ground growth dies down

Fall-Winter

- Bulbs remain dormant underground

Camas is one of the Pacific Northwest's most recognizable signs of spring.

Natively Beautiful Fact:

*For Pacific Northwest Indigenous communities, including **Coast Salish** and **Lummi** peoples, Camas have long been a vital food source. Its bulbs were carefully harvested, prepared, and shared. Meadows where camas grows were actively tended, through practices like controlled burning and seasonal stewardship to ensure its continued abundance.*

These landscapes are cultural spaces shaped by generations of knowledge and care.

KINNIKINNICK

(*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)



A Plant That Connects Ground, People, and Place

Spreading low across the earth, **Kinnikinnicks** (pronounced as **kin-knee-kin-nick**) form a living carpet in some of the Pacific Northwest's most rugged landscapes. It thrives where other plants struggle, holding the ground together while quietly supporting life around it.

Look for it:

- On coastal cliffs and sandy beaches
- In dry forests and open woodlands
- On rocky slopes and moist soils



Its story is not just ecological, but cultural! Rooted in traditions that span generations and regions.

How to Identify It

- Low-growing, mat-forming evergreen shrub
- Small, thick, oval leaves with a glossy surface
- Pale pink, urn-shaped flowers
- Bright red berries that persist into fall and wintertime
- Woody stems that trail along the ground



Plants, People, and Place

The name **Kinnikinnick** comes from an Algonquian word for "mixture."

Across many Indigenous tribes in the Pacific Northwest, its leaves and berries have long been used in carefully prepared mixtures for medicinal, social, and ceremonial purposes. This plant reflects connections that link people, traditions, and landscapes across time.

Seasons of the Kinnikinnick

Spring

- Pink, bell-shaped flowers bloom

Summer

- Evergreen leaves remain vibrant

Fall-Winter

- Bright red berries persist, providing food for wildlife

As an evergreen, it provides structure and color year-round.

Take A Closer Look!

Look down... this plant may be right at your feet!

How does it spread across the ground? What textures do you notice in its leaves and stems?

Can you spot flowers or berries?

Sometimes the most important plants aren't the tallest, but the ones that quietly hold everything together.

REDWOOD SORREL (OXALIS)

(*Oxalis oregana*)



A Forest Floor in Motion

At first glance, **Oxalis** may seem still, with soft green leaves carpeting the forest floor. But look closer, and you'll see a plant that responds constantly to light, moisture, and time!

In shaded forests of the Pacific Northwest, Oxalis reflects the changing rhythms of both the seasons and the day.



Look for it:

- In cool, damp forest floors
- In old-growth and mature forests

In Washington, it often forms lush green carpets beneath towering trees.

Oxalis closely follows changes in light and moisture throughout the year.

Why It Matters

Oxalis supports forest health in subtle but important ways:

- Helps retain moisture in the soil
- Protects the forest floor from erosion
- Provides habitat for small insects
- Contributes to nutrient cycling as leaves decompose



Seasons of the Landscape

This plant reflects change on a smaller scale. As seasons shift, Oxalis adjusts and respond to light, rain, and temperature. Their movements remind us that seasonal change isn't always dramatic, but it is constant.

Seasons of the Oxalis

Spring

- Fresh leaves and delicate flowers emerge

Summer

- Dense mats of green cover the ground

Fall

- Growth slows as sunlight dims

Winter

- Leaves may persist or decompose into the soil

Take A Closer Look!

Take a moment to observe the leaves! What changes can you notice right now?

Are they open or folded?

What time of day is it? Is it sunny or overcast?

Oxalis leaves fold at night or in heavy rain, then reopen with daylight, quietly responding to the world around them.

SALAL

(*Gaultheria shallon*)

A Layer That Shapes the Forest

Look beneath the towering trees, and you'll often find **Salal** forming a dense, glossy layer across the forest floor. It fills the space between canopy and ground, shaping how the forest looks, feels, and functions.

In the Pacific Northwest, Salal are more than a plant, they is a defining part of the forest's structure.

Why It Matters?

Salals grow widely across the Pacific Northwest, especially in coastal and lowland forests. They also play an important role in forest ecosystems:

- Creating dense shrub layers beneath taller trees
- Providing food for birds, mammals, and insects
- Offering shelter and nesting habitat
- Competing for light, influencing which plants can grow

They help shape the structure and diversity of the forest. In Washington, Salals often forms dense thickets that cover large areas of the evergreen.

Salal



Seasons of Salals

Spring-Early Summer

- Bell-shaped flowers bloom (see picture on left)

Summer

- Dark purple to black berries begin to develop

Late Summer-Fall

- Fruits ripen and are eaten by wildlife

Winter

- Evergreen leaves persist, maintaining forest structure

Natively Beautiful Fact:

Take a look around... you may notice salals everywhere you're standing! Their dense growth forms a living layer beneath the trees, shaping how the forest feels and functions. Salals remind us that forests aren't just made of towering trees, they are also built from layers of life, all working together.

PACIFIC RHODODENDRON

(Rhododendron macrophyllum)



Look for it:

- In open woodlands and along forest edges
- On mountain slopes and coastal hillsides
- In acidic, well-drained soils

Pacific Rhododendrons grow across forests, the coast, and mountain slopes in the PNW.

How to Identify It

- Large clusters of pink to rose-purple flowers
- Thick, leathery evergreen leaves
- Upright or spreading shrub form
- Smooth gray-brown woody stems

Beauty That Supports Life

Pacific Rhododendrons supports forest life in multiple ways:

- Flowers provide nectar for bees and other pollinators
- Dense foliage offers shelter for birds and small animals
- Evergreen leaves contribute to year-round habitat structure
- Help maintain biodiversity in forest edge environments

As a State Flower, Pacific Rhododendrons are a symbol of the region, but its beauty also serves a deeper purpose!

Take a Closer Look:

Spend a moment with the flowers.

What colors and shapes stand out to you? Do you notice any pollinators visiting?

How might these blooms guide insects toward nectar?

Sometimes what draws our attention is also what supports life around us.

Beauty That Sustains the Forest Statewide

With its bold clusters of pink blossoms, **Pacific Rhododendrons** are one of the most recognizable plants in the Pacific Northwest.

These vibrant blooms attract pollinators at just the right time, supporting life throughout the forest.



Rhododendrons are widely recognized as the Washington state flower.



Seasons of the Pacific Rhododendron

Late Spring-Early Summer

- Large flower clusters bloom

Summer

- Evergreen leaves remain dense and vibrant

Fall-Winter

- Leaves persist, maintaining structure

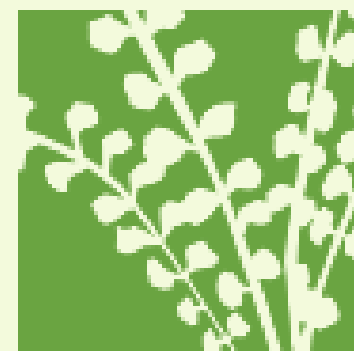
ABOUT THE EXHIBIT

The **Native Beauty Collection** at **Kruckeberg Botanic Garden** highlights native plant species of the Pacific Northwest and its ornamental horticultural importances, as well as the relationships that connect them to pollinators, wildlife, seasonal change, and people.

Through interpretive signage and living collections, this exhibit encourages visitors to look beyond plants as isolated specimens and instead recognize them as active participants within interconnected ecosystems.

The exhibit explores 5 core themes including:

- Beauty That Supports Life
- Layers of the Northwest Forest
- Seasons of the Landscape
- Plants, People, and Place
- Land and the Culture



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Together, these themes invite visitors to observe how native plants shape biodiversity, support habitats, reflect seasonal rhythms, and connect deeply to regional identity and cultural knowledge.

The **Native Beauty Collection** was developed to support curiosity, reflection, and appreciation for the living landscapes of the Pacific Northwest.

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