

# Shoreline Planting: Suggestions & Resources

## Go Native

Living near a shoreline provides unique landscaping opportunities. Choosing native plants helps keep water clean, control erosion and reduce flooding; they require less maintenance and are great for local wildlife.

This list is a limited selection of native plants, suitable for shorelines, that are commonly carried at nurseries that specialize in natives. Before purchasing plants, do three simple things: assess the conditions; identify which plants will thrive in those conditions; and be familiar with those plants that are problematic in our local waters or listed as noxious weeds (see reverse).

## Habitat Conditions: Light, Moisture & Soil

First, note how much sun or shade the planting site gets. Second, how much water is there? Is it generally inundated? If not, dig a hole and note how high the water table is. If the water table is near the surface, choose wetland plants. However, remember that the water level for most lakes differs significantly between summer and winter. Third, note the type of soil. Soil is very important but is also the most easily altered of the three major habitat elements. Organic material and other soil amendments can be used to accommodate your plant selections, if needed.

## Selected Native Wetland and Aquatic Plants by Type and Habitat

### HERBACEOUS PLANTS

#### Emergent in wet or moist soil

- Tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)
- Tall mannagrass (*Glyceria elata*)
- Reed mannagrass (*Glyceria grandis*)
- Daggerleaf rush (*Juncus ensifolius*)
- Common rush (*Juncus effusus*) — Plants sold in nurseries are typically not native and may form dense stands.
- Other rushes (*Juncus* sp.)
- Small-flowered woodrush (*Luzula parviflora*)
- Skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanum*)
- Yellow monkey-flower (*Mimulus guttatus*)
- Coltsfoot (*Petasites frigidus*)
- Cooley hedgenettle (*Stachys cooleyae*)

#### Emergent in standing water

##### Bulrushes

- Tule, Hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*)
- Woolly sedge, woolgrass (*Scirpus atrocinctus*, *S. cyperinus*)
- Small fruited bulrush (*Scirpus microcarpus*)

##### Sedges

- Slough sedge (*Carex obnupta*)
- Lenticular sedge (*Carex lenticularis*)
- Sawbeak sedge (*Carex stipata*)
- Beaked sedge (*Carex utriculata*) — May form dense stands.

##### Other emergents

- Creeping spike-rush (*Eleocharis palustris*)
- Water-parsley (*Oenanthe sarmentosa*)
- Wapato, arrowhead (*Sagittaria latifolia*)
- Bur-reeds (*Sparganium emersum*, *S. angustifolium*)
- Cattail (*Typha latifolia*)

### SHRUBS

#### Tolerate standing water

- Red stem dogwood (*Cornus sericea* or *C. stolonifera*)
- Pacific ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*)
- Labrador tea (*Rhododendron*, or *Ledum, groenlandicum*)
- Hooker's willow (*Salix hookeri*)
- Sitka willow (*Salix sitchensis*) — Spreads easily.
- Mountain or subalpine spirea (*Spiraea densiflora*) — Mountain species that can tolerate sea level; not invasive.
- Hardhack (*Spiraea douglasii*) — Forms large dense thickets at water's edge. Consult with neighbors before planting!

#### Wet or moist soil

- Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*)
- Pacific crabapple (*Malus fusca*)
- Swamp gooseberry, swamp currant (*Ribes lacustre*)
- Swamp rose (*Rosa pisocarpa*)
- Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)
- Scouler's willow (*Salix scouleriana*)

#### Moist or damp soil

- Indian plum, Osoberry (*Oemlaria*, or *Osmeronia, cerasiformis*)
- Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)
- Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)

#### Floating

- Yellow pond-lily/Spatterdock (*Nuphar luteum*) — Grows in up to 13 feet of water.



**King County**  
Lake Stewardship Program

King County Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Lake Stewardship Program  
201 S. Jackson St., #600  
Seattle, WA 98104  
206-296-6519

## Selected Native Wetland and Aquatic Plants (Continued)

### TREES

#### Selected trees that prefer or tolerate saturated soils

Broadleaved deciduous trees

- Red alder (*Alnus rubra*) — A weedy species that can be a management issue. May volunteer without planting
- Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*)
- Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* or *P. trichocarpa*) — Similar to red alder's habits.
- Pacific willow (*Salix lasiandra*)

Conifers

- Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*)
- Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*)

### WARNING: PLANTS TO AVOID!

Some nurseries and pond or aquarium supply stores may sell plants that are suitable for small, isolated artificial ponds but could wreak havoc in natural lakes and wetlands. Some may even be listed as noxious weeds with the state or county. Avoid these plants to save yourself considerable time and money in eradication efforts later on. It is best to put only native plants in natural water bodies. And remember, most plants have many different common names, so when in doubt, go by the scientific name.

#### Selected Aquatic Plants on the King County Noxious Weed List

##### Class A Weeds (Eradication is required by law.)

- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)

##### Class B Weeds (Control is required by law.)

- Fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)
- Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*)
- Policeman's helmet (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- Water primrose (*Ludwigia hexapetala*)
- Garden loosestrife (*Lysimachia vulgaris*)
- Spotted loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctata*)
- Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
- Parrotfeather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)
- Yellow floating heart (*Nymphoides peltata*)

##### Weeds of concern

- Yellow-flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*)
- Fragrant water-lily (*Nymphaea odorata*)
- Reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*)
- Common reed (*Phragmites australis*)
- Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)
- Hybrid Japanese knotweed or Bohemian knotweed (*Polygonum Xbohemicum*)
- Himalayan knotweed (*Polygonum polystachyum*)
- Giant knotweed (*Polygonum sachalinense*)

#### State of Washington Quarantine Plant List (Prohibited from Sale)

- Indigo bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*)
- Flowering rush (*Butomus umbellatus*)
- Great- or hairy willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*)
- European frog-bit, water poppy (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*)
- Wand loosestrife (*Lythrum virgatum*)
- Marsh Dayflower, Asian Spiderwort (*Murdannia keisak*)
- Grass-leaved arrowhead (*Sagittaria graminea*)
- Water chestnut (*Trapa natans*)

#### Select List of Weeds with Potential for Local Problems

- Giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
- Asian anacharis (*Egeria najas*)
- Water hyacinth (*Eichornia sp.*) — Any species.
- Watercress (*Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum*)
- Bur- or sessile-fruited arrowhead (*Sagittaria rigida*)
- Giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*)
- Narrowleaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*)

#### Non-native Species of Recent Concern in King County

- Curly leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*)
- Tapegrass (*Vallisneria americana*)

### REFERENCES

#### Books

- *A Field Guide to the Common Wetland Plants of Western Washington and Northwestern Oregon* by Sarah Spear Cooke
- *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest: An Illustrated Guide* by Arthur Kruckeberg
- *Grow Your Own Native Landscape* by Michael Leigh (To order, call 206-296-6519)
- *Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest* by Russell Link
- *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska* by Jim Pojar and Andy Mackinnon
- *Wetland Plants of Oregon and Washington* by Jennifer B. Guard

#### Web Sites

- King County: Pacific Northwest Native Plant Resources  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/npresrcs.htm>  
206-296-6519
- King County: Noxious Weed Information  
<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/lands/weeds/>  
206-296-0290
- King Conservation District: Wetland Plants  
[http://www.kingcd.org/pro\\_wet.htm](http://www.kingcd.org/pro_wet.htm)  
206-764-3410



Flyer text can be made available in alternative formats, upon request.  
Call Katie Sauter Messick to make arrangements at 206-263-5086 or TTY Relay: 711