

Native Plant Spotlight by Krys Kirkwood

Acer macrophyllum – Big Leaf Maple, Oregon Maple



This large, often multi-stemmed, tree can grow approximately to 100 feet tall. Young bark is green and smooth, older bark is gray-brown, ridged, and often covered with mosses, lichens and ferns. The flowers are greenish-yellow, numerous on short stalks in a hanging cylindrical cluster appearing with or before the leaves. These trees can be found in dry to moist sites, often with Douglas-fir, often on sites disturbed by fire, clearing or logging; at low to middle elevations. Big Leaf Maple carries a greater load of mosses and other plants than any other tree species in our region.



Cornus nuttallii – Western Flowering Dogwood, Pacific Dogwood



This is a much-branched, irregular tree that grows up to 60 feet in height. The bark is blackish-brown, smooth, becoming finely ridged with age. The flowers are greenish-white tipped with purple, small and inconspicuous; in tight, hemispheric clusters surrounded by 4-6 white or pinkish tinged, large, showy bracts, the inflorescence appearing to be one large flower. It flowers in spring, and often repeating in early fall. Fruit is a bright red, round cluster of oval fleshy berries. This tree can be found at low elevations; usually on moist, well-drained sites, often along streams or gullies; in open to fairly dense, usually mixed, forest.



I strongly urge leaving any of our native plants undisturbed. Enjoy them in their natural environment. Seek out nurseries and professionals who sell and/or deal with natives if you are wanting to add any to your garden.

- Photos: Krys Kirkwood
- Reference: Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Pojar and Mackinnon
Wildflowers of the Pacific Northwest by Mark Turner and Phyllis Gustafson