

Native Plant Spotlight by Krys Kirkwood

Ribes sanguineum – Red-flowering currant



This locally common erect, spreading shrub can grow anywhere from 3-9 feet. It tends to bloom late spring with its flowers in terminal cluster, 10-20 usually bright reddish-pink to (less commonly) white. The berries are blue-black and edible, but unpalatable. This currant grows in many habitats like open woods, forests, rocky slopes, low to middle elevations.

Sanguineum, meaning "blood red" or "bloody", refers to the flowers—a rather violent way of describing the beautiful flowers, which are harbingers of spring and hummingbirds. Several cost

Salish groups of native peoples did eat the berries of this currant, but they were not highly regarded, nor collected for drying. This shrub was introduced to European horticulture by plant-hunter David Douglas.

Viola orbiculata – round-leaf violet, dark woods violet



This pretty little, yellow violet can be quite common, blooming in early spring. It is perennial and grows between 1-3 inches tall. It can be found in meadows, west-side forest, east-side forest, alpine, and subalpine. Flowers tend to be clustered, without stolons. Basal leaves on long stalks are thin, round, with scalloped edges and rounded lobes at base of leaf blade. The three lower petals are purple-penciled. Round-leaf violet closely resembles *Viola sempervirens* (evergreen violet), which has runners and bearded petals, and has purple blotches under older leaves.

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 want 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