



Master Gardener™ Program

Native Plants

Ann Geyer, LCMGA

Some Topics

- ▶ Why natives are important
- ▶ How to add natives to your existing garden
- ▶ What natives to choose—so many options
- ▶ Where to acquire native plants
- ▶ Where to find more information

Terms

▶ Native Plant

- A plant that occurs naturally in a particular region, habitat or ecosystem without human introduction

▶ Cultivated (non-native, alien, imported, ornamental . . .)

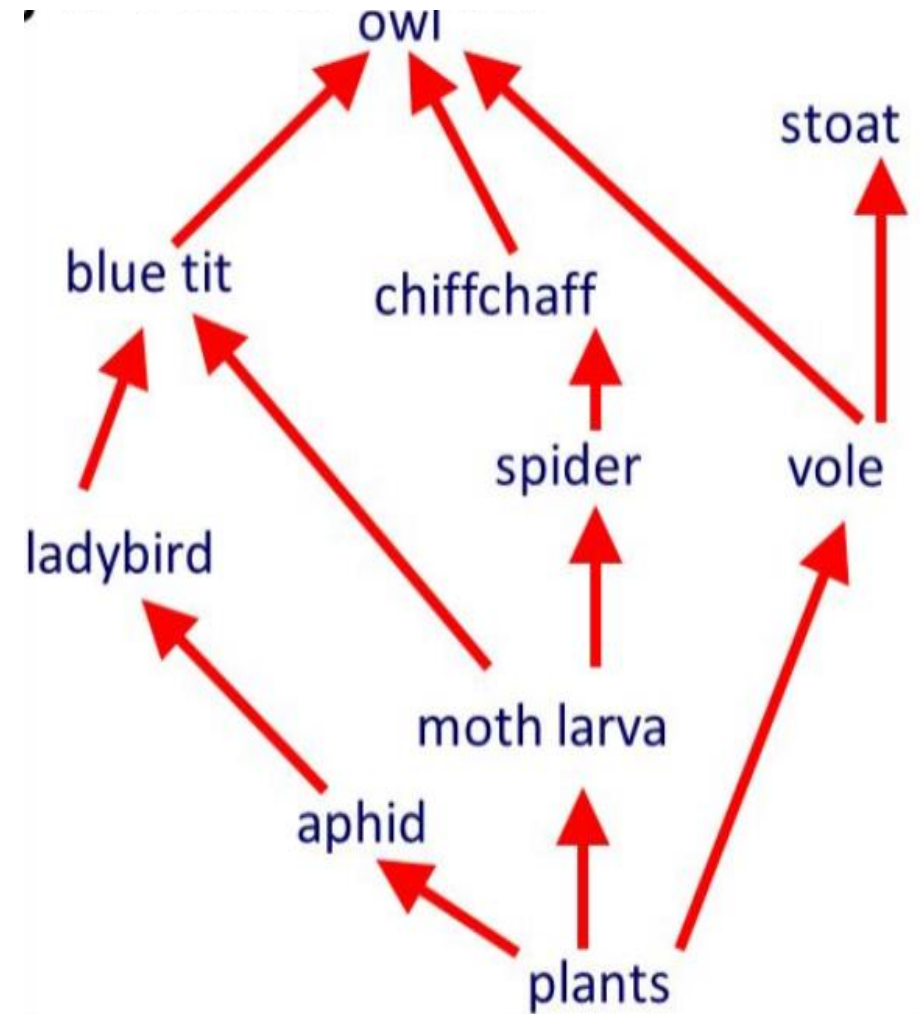
- Introduced through human intervention
- Created to fix plant characteristics using cross-breeding propagation methods
- Can be locally grown or imported

▶ Invasive

- Non-native plant that causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Natives are the basis of our food web

- ▶ Almost animal life relies on plants
- ▶ Plants convert energy into protein
- ▶ Insects rely on plants directly for protein
- ▶ Most insects can develop and reproduce only on plants within their local ecosystem
- ▶ Higher order wildlife relies on insects and so forth



We Need More Native Plants



- ▶ 1:1 relationship between habitat and the number of species
- ▶ 90-95% of US land does not support any ecosystem
 - ▶ 50,000 sq miles of paved roads (5X size of NJ)
 - ▶ 41% of land is in agriculture
 - ▶ 54% is suburban or urban
 - ▶ 40 million acres of non-native lawn
 - ▶ Remaining forest land is fragmented into small lots
- ▶ Half of world's wildlife has disappeared in last 40 years
- ▶ Only 1% of the 4 million insect species are “pests”
- ▶ The other 99% contribute in positive ways to their ecosystems

Insects are Specialists

- ▶ 90% of insects only eat 1-2 species of plant
- ▶ Plants produce chemicals to affect the taste of leaves as a defense mechanism
- ▶ As a plant species declines so do the insects that rely on it
- ▶ As insects decline so do the birds and animals



Insects that specialize on one plant are no longer able to eat other plants.

- ▶ 96 percent of all terrestrial bird species in North America feed insects to their young
- ▶ Planting insect-proof plants is like serving up plastic food
- ▶ No insects = No birds
- ▶ No natives = No insects



Birds Need LOTS of Insects

- Chickadees require 400 caterpillars per day to feed young
- Fledglings spend 16 days in the nest
- Equates to 4800 caterpillars for each clutch
- Ave 25 caterpillars/tree -- it takes 192 trees to produce one clutch
- Each tree takes 225 sq ft so about 1 acre of trees for each nest



Insects have Preferences



▶ Top Ten Natives (250-500)

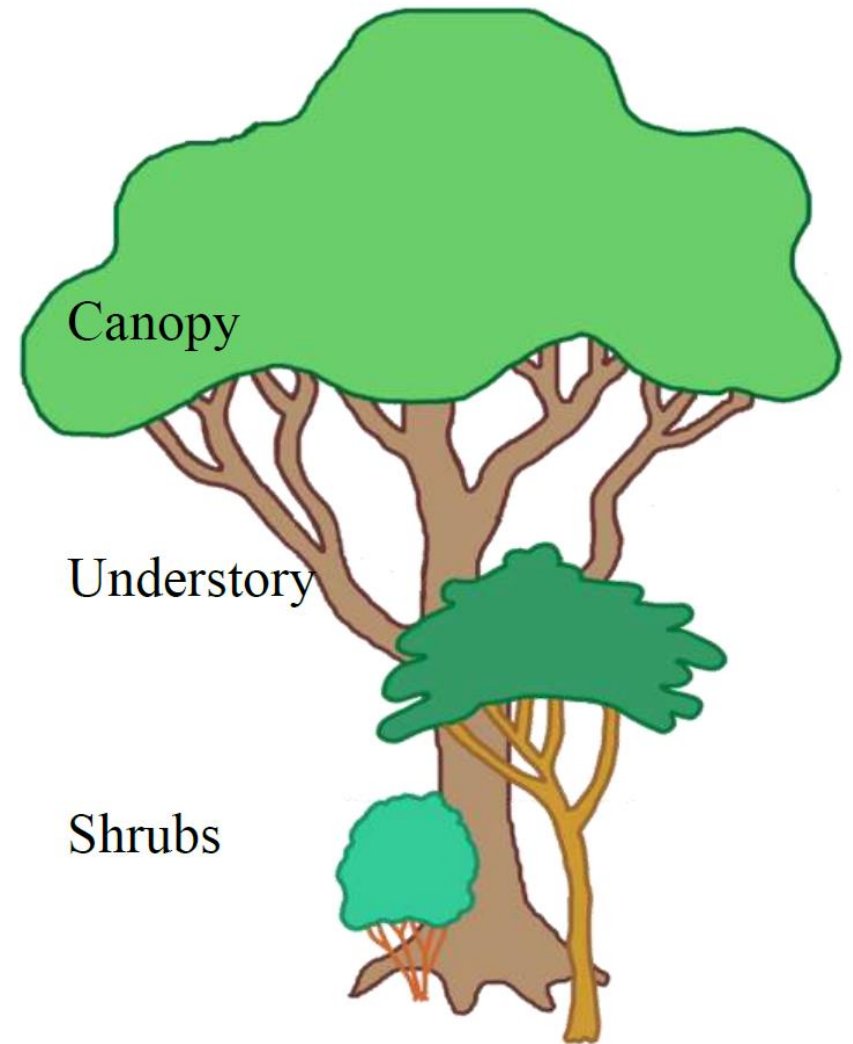
- ▶ Oak
- ▶ Pit Fruit
- ▶ Willow
- ▶ Birch
- ▶ Crabapple
- ▶ Maples
- ▶ Huckleberry
- ▶ Alder
- ▶ Pine
- ▶ Berries

▶ Non-native Ornamentals

- ▶ Burning bush 12
- ▶ Wisteria 10
- ▶ Hydrangea 5
- ▶ Cotoneaster 3
- ▶ Lavender 2
- ▶ Weigela 2
- ▶ Buddleia 1
- ▶ Forsythia 1
- ▶ Callicarpa 1
- ▶ Heather 1

Introducing Natives Into Your Landscape

1. Reduce lawn
2. Add trees and shrubs
3. Caterpillar friendly
4. Plant more—27 plants per ½ acre
5. Select focal species and plant 3-5 of each
6. Keep mature size in mind
7. Remove existing invasives; avoid new ones
8. Aim for better balance between
ornamentals and natives
9. Create corridors connecting natural areas
10. Practice benign neglect



Early Season



Pacific Rhododendron



Mock Orange



Oregon Grape



Mountain lilac-ceanothus



Red Flowering Currant

- Delicate wildflowers and early shrubs
- New leaves emerge on deciduous trees
- Ferns emerge
- Blooming groundcovers
- Great time to hit plants sales

Mid Season



Serviceberry



Oceanspray



Coyote mint



Salal



Oregon
sunshine

- Bright flowers for pollinators
- Berries and fruits for wildlife
- Groundcovers to support soil and hide fragile or small creatures



Douglas
Aster



Hazelnut



White
Oak



Vine
Maple



Goldenrod

Late Season

- Fall foliage
- Nuts and seeds for wildlife
- Late blooming summer flowers
- Wildlife watching
- Migrations begin

Lots of Resources

► Websites

- www.orcoastmga.org/nativeplants
- OSU extension
- Native Plant Society of Oregon
- Hansen's NW Native Plant Database

► Books

- Bringing Nature Home by Doug Tallamy
- Real Gardens Grow Natives by Eileen Stark
- Native Plants in the Coastal Garden by April Pettinger

► Native Plant Sales

- County Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Master Gardener Programs
- Nursery List



Go Native!